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# PARENTAL CHOICE OF NONDENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: REASONS FOR CHOICE, EXIT, AND THE TYPES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Robert M. Hall

The Graduate School  
University of Kentucky

2009

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REASONS FOR CHOICE, EXIT, AND THE TYPES AND SOURCES OF  
INFORMATION USED

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership Studies  
in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky

By  
Robert M. Hall

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Charles Hausman, Educational Leadership Studies

2009

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## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

### PARENTAL CHOICE OF NONDENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: REASONS FOR CHOICE, EXIT, AND THE TYPES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED

School Choice is a topic that finds itself at the top of school reform and political agendas across the United States, while also being a significant focal point in the educational literature. However, little attention in the debate has been placed on private, independent school choice – including private religious school choice – despite that data that shows “seventy-nine percent of all private schools had a religious affiliation in 1999–2000: 30 percent . . . affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, and 49 percent with other religious groups” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 3) and that “initial research on school choice that concentrated on private schools did acknowledge that many parents are likely to choose a private school for religious values” (Bauch and Goldring, 1995).

This study focuses on examining the choice behaviors of families who choose independent, nondenominational Christian education, including the reasons they choose to exit before graduation and including the central role of information sources in making such choices. The study uses Rational Choice Theory and Hirschman’s Exit, Voice and Loyalty Theory as theoretical frameworks in order to couch the findings. The conclusions of this study are further couched in a bi-modal framework that posits choice involves “foundational factors” necessary for further investigation of potential schools and “factors of ethos” that, in essence, “break the tie” in the choice process – leading families to choose one particular school over others.

The findings of the study, similar to the findings within other school choice literature, show that word-of-mouth information sources – predominant in informal/relational connections – are clearly the “most helpful” and “most important” sources of information in the choice process. However, the importance of web-based sources and achievement test scores also are found to be significant information sources for families who choose private, nondenominational Christian Education. In addition, in this study the differences between exiters and families that reenroll are not shown to be statistically significant and, therefore, the author suggests that theories focused on the ongoing relationships between constituents and organizations, instead of theories related

to exit such as Hirschman's Exit theory, may be more beneficial in the ongoing school choice and school reform debates.

**KEYWORDS:** School Choice, Christian Education, Rational Choice Theory, Hirschman's Exit, Voice and Loyalty Theory

Robert M. Hall

April 13, 2009

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INFORMATION USED

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DISSERTATION

Robert M. Hall

The Graduate School  
University of Kentucky  
2009



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*This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Kristine, and my children, Charlie and Grace.  
Thanks for graciously and patiently putting up with a part-time husband and dad for the  
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## **CHAPTER ONE: PARENTAL CHOICE OF NONDENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: REASONS FOR CHOICE, EXIT, AND THE TYPES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED**

Confidence in public education has been a study in contrasts, as well as an increasing source of public angst, over the last several decades. It has reached the point where school reform and school choice are now at the top of political, educational, and parental agendas across the country. At the heart of this debate is the juxtaposition of data that show parents are pleased with the performance of their local public school/school of choice while simultaneously being discouraged about the current status of U.S education overall. The 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools (PDK/Gallup Poll) puts it this way: "What the data says to us is that the public assigns generally high marks to the local public schools and that the level of satisfaction rises the closer the public gets to its schools (Rose and Gallup, 2007, p. 40). When assigning a numerical value to this concurrence, the PDK/Gallup Poll reports that 67% of public school parents would score the school that "their oldest child attends" as an A or B, while only 14% of those same respondents would rate the "public schools in the nation as a whole" at the A or B level (Rose and Gallup, 2007, p. 40).

When data measures the satisfaction of parents of public *and* private school children, the numbers are very similar. For example,

in 2003 [both in public and private schools], more than half of all children in grades 3–12 had parents who reported that they were "very satisfied" with each of the following aspects of their child's education: their child's school (58 percent), their child's teachers (59 percent), the school's academic standards (58 percent), and the school's order and discipline (60 percent). . . Comparisons with comparable data for 1993 show no measurable differences in the parents' reported

satisfaction with each of these four aspects of their child's education (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, p. 82).

It seems fair to say, then, that when parents choose the type of schooling for their child – whether attendance at their local public school, another form of public school such as charter or magnet schools, or attendance in private schooling – they report a significantly higher level of satisfaction than they do for public schools in general. This difference in opinion between a parent's specific school of choice and attendance-zone public schools in general (where students attend based solely on geographical location) has been measured as far back as the early 1990's where "empirical research universally show greater satisfaction among parents who exercise choice of school relative to parents who are assigned to a school" (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1992). Therefore, in great part due to the documented correlation between parental choice and parental satisfaction, "in the ongoing debate over school reform, parent choice has moved to the forefront" (Hausman and Goldring, 2000, p. 105).

### **The Changing Face of School Choice**

The current debate over choice in public school education can be traced back to the establishment of magnet schools during the 1970's and the federal courts' acceptance of these schools as a legal method to achieve desegregation (see *Morgan v. Kerrigan*, 1976). Magnet schools were established to "provide school districts with an alternative to mandatory reassignment and forced bussing by providing a choice for parents among several school options with each offering a different set of distinctive course offerings or instructional formats" (Goldring & Smrekar, 2000, p. 17). With the court's ruling and the resultant explosion of magnet schools in urban settings, parental choice in public schooling became a central force in the burgeoning reformation of public education. In

fact, by the mid-1990's "magnet schools and programs served 1.2 million students [and] . . . Sixty-eight percent of all urban students were educated in districts having magnet schools" (Steel and Levine, 1994). When combined with the establishment in the 1990's of charter schools – "publicly funded schools that [are] typically governed by a group or organization under a contract or charter with the state" (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 69), one can clearly see that public school choice has established a strong foothold in the growing landscape of educational choice. In 2004-2005, nearly 890,000 students attended charter schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

More recently, however, court decisions rescinding the orders for desegregation in public schools and allowing for the controlled use of vouchers has again changed the face of school choice. Now, instead of the primary alternative to an assigned public school being only the magnet school or charter school, "the market-place for parents in urban districts includes magnet schools, charter schools, and private schools" (Goldring and Rowley, 2006, p. 1). When one includes the myriad of public and private school choices in urban *and* suburban settings, as well as the varied attempts to use publicly funded government vouchers to fund individuals in their choice of schools – public or private – it becomes obvious as to why the debate over choice has grown more intense.

Even though the choices for public or private education have grown, including choices for low-income parents in urban settings where "the increasing availability of private school vouchers that are targeted to low-income households" (Goldring and Rowley, 2006, p. 1) has made previously unaffordable private schools affordable, the vast majority of the literature on school choice is focused on parental reasons for choice in public urban school contexts only. In contrast, there is a relative dearth of data regarding

parental reasons for choice of private schools, especially private religious schools, including those in suburban locations. This, despite the fact that “seventy-nine percent of all private schools had a religious affiliation in 1999–2000: 30 percent . . . affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, and 49 percent with other religious groups” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 3) and that “initial research on school choice that concentrated on private schools did acknowledge that many parents are likely to choose a private school for religious values” (Bauch and Goldring, 1995).

### **Research Questions**

This study seeks to better understand the reasons for parental choice of an independent, non-denomination Christian school and, when applicable, parents’ decision to exit the school before completion of the school’s program. Literature related to school choice from community-based public schools, magnet and charter schools, and private/parochial/religious schools, as well as literature related to Rational Choice Theory and Hirschman’s Exit, Voice, and Loyalty Theory will provide the empirical and theoretical framework for the study. It is from this literature and the use of surveys directed to families enrolled in a private, non-denominational Christian school that the author will seek to provide data related to the following three research questions:

1. What sources and types of information do choosers use that result in successful enrollment in a private, non-denominational Christian School?
2. What are parents’ reasons for choosing a private, non-denominational Christian School?
3. What are parents’ reasons for choosing to exit the school?

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## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study seeks to better understand the reasons for parental choice of an independent, non-denomination Christian school and, when applicable, parents' decision to exit the school before completion of the school's program. Literature related to school choice from community-based public schools, magnet and charter schools, and private/parochial/religious schools, as well as literature related to Rational Choice Theory and Hirschman's Exit, Voice, and Loyalty Theory will provide the empirical and theoretical framework for the study. It is from this literature and the use of surveys directed to families enrolled in a private, non-denominational Christian school that the author will seek to provide data related to the following three research questions:

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### **Communal Values and Privatization: Linkages to School Choice**

Two movements can be linked together when seeking to understand the current intersection between school choice and private, religious education – the movement toward preserving communal values as a means to maintain and protect specific ideology and the movement toward privatization as a means for social reform. As Cookson states,

As I see it, two competing metaphors will shape the public education system of the future. The first is that of democracy. At the heart of the democratic relationship is the implicit or explicit covenant: important human interactions are essentially communal. . . The second metaphor is that of the market. At the heart

of the market relationship is the implicit or explicit contract: human interactions are essentially exchanges. Market metaphors lead to a belief in the primacy and efficacy of consumership as a way of life” (1994, p. 99).

In the context of school choice – whether only public choice or a public/private hybrid of school choice – it is imperative to have knowledge of both of these movements – privatization and market forces as well as the desire for communal, often democratic, interaction – if one is to understand why families, when afforded numerous publicly-funded, community-based educational choices, would opt for school choice that may include a private K-12 school that, in the end, may add up to tens of thousands of dollars of personal expense annually.

### *The Struggle over Communal Values in Public Education*

While privatization may well be viewed by many contemporary advocates of school choice as the ideological linchpin that drives the current debate over education reform, the struggle over communal values and the role of private and public education in supplying such values, has been *the* major driving force in school choice since the inception of public education in the United States with the establishment of common schools in the 1840’s. As Viteritti (1999) expresses,

There is no episode in the American chronicle that better illustrates the inherent dangers of majority rule that so preoccupied [James] Madison than the history of the common school. It is a story that continues to unfold. The tensions between religion and public education that characterizes contemporary struggles over school choice have always been a subplot in the developing drama (p. 145).

Starting in 1840’s Massachusetts with Horace Mann’s pledge of “strict religious neutrality in the schools and [his call] for the ‘entire exclusion of religious teaching’” (Viteritti, 1999, p. 148), the debate has focused on what public schools should require in

its curricular offerings to ensure the development of good citizens. Of course, Mann's "religious neutrality" was anything but, as his plans were much more associated with equating American communal values with Protestantism – a position that only gained prominence in the years leading up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ironically, many of the arguments used to sustain the anti-Catholic, pro-Protestant public schools during this time in American history have been slowly turned around and used to extinguish the role of religion of any kind in public education. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, what had become a separatist movement pitting Protestants against Catholics and Jews became a secularist movement pitting religion of any kind against a newly defined, secular, common good.

The major player in this new struggle was John Dewey – a "New England Congregationalist by upbringing who by the age of thirty was ready to abandon his church membership" (Viteritti, 1999, p. 158). While Dewey, and Mann before him, shared a passion for the common school, Dewey, unlike Mann, was "uncompromisingly determined to remove all religion from the classroom" (Viteritti, 1994, p. 158). As history demonstrates, the secularist ideas of Dewey won the day and the common school's mission of developing solid, well-educated citizens now excluded religiosity of any kind.

#### *Private Christian Education Driven by Communal Values*

However, both in Dewey's America as well as in contemporary American society, the desire for religious education did not die. Religious education, in fact, still attracts many families that consider such participation as a way to maintain values they consider essential in the raising of their children. "Parents send their children to religious schools in part to help preserve a religious identity and instill religious values" (Cohen-Zada &

Sander, 2007) and, as of 2003-2004, 46 percent of students attending private school were enrolled in parochial schools (U. S. Department of Education, 2007) and “the percentage of students enrolled in Conservative Christian schools increased [when compared to 1989-90] from 11 to 15 percent” (US Department of Education, 2007, p. 25).

It is difficult to argue, then, that a private, Christian school is anything but an institution driven by the ideas of privatization and communal values reviewed above. By its very nature as a *private* school, it is directly involved in the “business” – and that is the most accurate term – of attracting potential “customers” while, as a *Christian* school, the institution seeks to attract “believers” who are particularly interested in a school built around common religious values.

However, as noted above, a frequent argument – and one of Dewey’s main objections to the inclusion of religiosity in schools – was its potential to undermine democracy. “Dewey’s lasting effect on American education was to give credence to the attitude that organized religion was damaging . . . to democracy itself” (Viteritti, 1999, p. 159). Contemporarily, Henig (1994) points to this argument against private schooling as well. “The real danger in the market-based proposals for choice is not that they might allow some students to attend privately-run schools at public expense, but that they will erode the public forums in which decisions with societal consequences can democratically be resolved” (p. 200).

Advocates of religious schooling, whether parochial, church-based, or non-denominational, however, argue that families are drawn to private schools by a set of values very similar to those espoused in public discourse regarding democracy – among them community, diversity, and collective purpose – but they do so under a different



banner than government; they gather and support these ideas under the banner of religion. This alternative to public education, advocates argue, provides an umbrella where democratic principles apply, but also where religious values that have been removed from the culture and discussion in the public school arena can be included. Chubb and Moe (1990) hint at the deterrent of public schools for religious families when they state, “The [public] schools are agencies of society as a whole, and everyone has a right to participate in their governance. Parents and students have a right to participate, too. But they have no right to win. In the end they have to take what society gives them” (p. 2).

If families, including and especially families of faith, think “what society gives them,” even though given them through a democratic process, is in conflict with a “higher calling” to their religious principles, they will most assuredly seek the pursuit of collective purpose, diversity, community, and other democratic principles in an educational environment that is not in direct conflict with these religious principles. As Viteritti (1999) points out, “[Communal values] cannot be forced. It is not assumed that schools, public schools in particular, are the only or the most effective institutions for acculturating people to the ethos of democracy” (p. 192).

This point of education providing for and supporting democratic principles – especially in creating an environment where many voices are brought to the fore – is so important in the debate over the inclusion and funding of private and religious schools in school choice plans, that some background information is important to include. Betts and Loveless (2005) state “the integration of students from a variety of backgrounds is one of the traditional purposes of American public schools. Indeed, the century-and-a-half old idea of the common school evokes an ideal in which all students in a community are

educated together. . . [But] American public schools have frequently failed to live up to the integrationist ideal” (p. 131). In fact, in reviewing the literature it can be argued that private nonsectarian and religious schools do as good as or better job in promoting diversity and as the argument goes – democracy, than do their public school counterparts. This data relative to public and private schools success (or lack thereof) in their attempts to integrate schools are a significant blow to those opposed to including private schools in school choice plans on grounds of their threat to democracy. If “integration is hoped to promote healthy social interaction among students of different backgrounds, ultimately leading to a more tolerant and open-minded citizenry” (Betts and Loveless, 2005, p. 131), as Dewey and subsequent likeminded thinkers surmise, then private schools can be considered as doing a better or equal job in this pursuit than public schools – even public schools of choice.

Consider that almost a half-century after *Brown v. Board of Education*, many school systems continue to look like checkerboards with identifiably ‘white’ and ‘minority’ schools, underscoring the point that many researchers have made that more important than raw demographic percentages is the actual distribution of different groups within a system or school. If we compare the percentage of Catholic, other religious, and regular nonsectarian schools (which seems the most appropriate comparison, since almost all religious schools offer a regular education program) in which minority students make up 10-49% of the student body, therefore, we find that 27.7% of Catholic schools, 26% of other religious schools, and 44.9% of regular nonsectarian private schools are racially integrated by this measure. By comparison, 33.4% of public schools in 1993-94 were similarly racially integrated (11-50% minority). Thus, nonsectarian private schools are far

ahead of public schools in promoting racial diversity, and religious private schools are not too far behind.

All of this data are even more convincing, advocates state, when it is understood in the context of the difficulties faced by religious, non-Catholic, schools in attracting minorities as “whites were most likely to select schools based on the basis of religious values” (Ogawa and Dutton, 1994, p. 281) than were racial/ethnic minorities. Data like that sighted above provide proponents of choice – especially proponents of religious school choice – with additional social capital as they debate with those opposed or neutral in regard to choice – especially when emphasizing the position that “the availability of such choice means that segregation of student populations by race and class would decrease because populations would be shaped by school performance instead of geography” (Lacireno-Paquet, et.al, 2002, p. 147).

### **Privatization as a Means for Social Reform**

The discussion and debate regarding the use of market theory and “the market metaphor” (Henig, 1994, p. xiii) in education did not arise in a vacuum. To the contrary, it can be convincingly argued that the movement toward the use of economic principles and market forces in education reform, specifically, is directly linked to, and is a subset of, a larger movement toward privatization as a means of social reform, in general. In 1962, ten years before the first magnet schools began dotting the urban educational landscape, Milton Freidman extolled the virtues of privatization in his book *Capitalism and Freedom*, which, while focused on privatization as a whole, included a chapter specifically related to the privatization of education. Over the years, Freidman, both in his book *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement* (1980) and in subsequent interviews (see

Kane, 2002), continued to be a staunch advocate of market forces and privatization as a means for social reform, as well as these forces being used as a means for education reform.

The movement toward privatization has not been a uniquely American one, however. Evidence of a growing privatization movement can be seen in almost all western and westernized countries around the world. Henig (1994) observes,

Not only in the United States, but in much of the world, dissatisfaction with the growing apparatus of government has sparked a privatization movement. Its goals are to shrink the public sector by selling government-owned assets and contracting with private firms to provide public services, and to replace large social-welfare ‘helping’ agencies with simpler voucher-type programs that encourage recipients to help themselves (p. 5).

Although in America and other western countries some would argue that privatization undermines the democratic process essential to the social and political health of the nation, advocates see privatization as an effective means of reform. These advocates accentuate that “pluralism and public-choice theory emphasize the ways in which government is enmeshed in a political battle among individuals and groups with fundamentally conflicting interests” (Henig, 1994, p. 8). In other words, privatization advocates argue that, if left solely to the government – which is free from the competition privatization affords – meaningful reform would stall as the political battle between diverse groups, with various interests and agendas, leads to the inability to reach a consensus that would mobilize these constituencies toward change. While the debate waxes and wanes in relation to privatization as a means of reform in the larger arena, in terms of education, privatization as a means of reform has never been a more hotly debated subject.

*Privatization and School Choice as Education Reform in the U.S. from 1970 – Present*

Private schools are nothing new. In fact, private schools predate what is now, at least in the United States, the most popular and widespread form of schooling – public education. These two forms of education, private and public, have co-existed – not always peacefully – in the United States for hundreds of years. While in the section below regarding communal values I will review the ongoing and long-held tensions between public and private education, the more contemporary and strident discussion revolves around the role of privatization in education. “One need only read the front pages of the *New York Times* or the editorial pages of the *Wall Street Journal* to recognize that there is an emerging consensus that privatizing education will lead to an educational renaissance” (Cookson, 1994, p. 100). It is abundantly clear that, indeed, education has not been spared the pressure of privatization advocates. “In fact, the privatization and education-reform movement are closely related . . . [with] the dominant strain in the contemporary education reform movement [having] been imbued with the same suspicion of government and collective enterprises that the privatization movement manifests” (Henig, 1994, p. 6).

As a result, much of modern education reform is driven and, conversely, resisted by arguments related to the purposeful and strategic use of capitalistic economic principles and the underlying use of market forces meant to drive privatization as a means for reform. Schneider concurs when he states, “While in the past, most educational movements focused on curriculum and teaching methods. Today’s reforms, however, center more on issues of governance” (1997, p. 1202).

In the U.S., for example, the idea of funding an individual student’s education – including private and religious education – with publicly-funded vouchers (while

allowing for the independent governance of these private schools receiving public funds) is a relatively new concept. It has caused raucous debate, and, in the end, can be directly linked to public school choice that began in the U.S. in the early 1970's with the magnet school movement and, consequently, the charter school movement of the early 1990's. (See Figure 2.1)

Combined with a burgeoning international movement toward privatization and a growing diversity within American culture that have caused some to yearn for schools committed to communal, often religious, values, the separate but relatively peaceful co-existence of private and public schooling has turned into an ideological and economic battleground. In tracing the modern school choice movement, one can see the progression from specifically targeted magnet schools in the 1970's to the use of vouchers to fund individual family choices across the educational spectrum – both public and private – in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

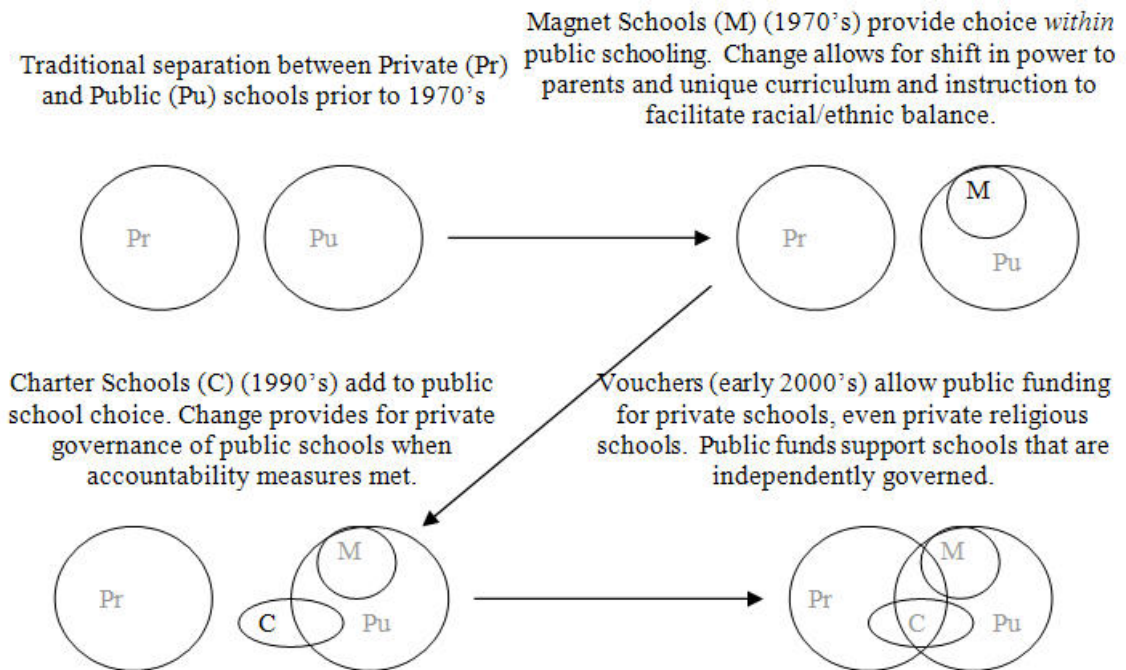


Figure 2.1. Changes in Educational Governance and Funding: Early 1970's through early 2000's

### Recent Court Rulings Related to the Use of Race in K-12 Public School Admissions

As a forewarning to those examining the many facets of school choice in 2007 and beyond, one should bear in mind the recent rulings of the United States Supreme Court regarding the use of race as a determinant in K-12 public school admissions criteria and the “Unitary Status” of school districts. (see *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education* and *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*). These rulings have reversed or minimized the rulings of earlier courts – especially as they relate to desegregation – and directly affect the mission of magnet schools whose primary purpose has been the deliberate use of race in the admission process to ensure a racially diverse student population. These rulings have yet to face the scrutiny of research regarding their effects on school choice, but, undoubtedly the rulings will only serve to

increase the public debate over choice and the effects of choice on diversity, desegregation, student achievement, and the myriad other topics surrounding the school choice debate.

### **The Magnet School Movement of the 1970's**

The first magnet schools were formed in order to avoid mandatory bussing and, in doing so, introduced a new form of school choice to families in public, mainly urban, educational settings. "School districts [were given] an alternative to mandatory reassignment and forced bussing by providing a choice for parents among several school options with each offering a set of distinctive course offerings or instructional formats" (Goldring & Smrekar, 2000, p. 17). These schools, which were "managed to ensure a racially balanced student population" (Goldring & Smrekar, 2000, p.17), did, indeed, represent the first modern form of public school choice. The established legality (see *Morgan v. Kerrigan*, 1976) and resultant popularity of magnet schools resulted in an explosion in the number of school districts – almost exclusively urban – that offered this form of choice.

By the 1991-92 school year, more than 1.2 million students were enrolled in magnet schools in 230 school districts (Yu and Taylor 1997). During the 1999-2000 school year there were more than 1,372 magnet schools across the United States [and] . . . 53 percent of large urban districts included magnet school programs as part of their desegregation plans, as compared with only 10 percent of suburban districts (Goldring & Smrekar, 2002, p. 13).

Ideologically, magnet schools allowed for families to pursue racial desegregation through choice while avoiding government-mandated bussing.

Overall, magnet schools introduced the American public to the potential benefits (and pitfalls) of school choice and, as a result, the debate over the merits of public school



choice, as well as the number and types of choices available, blossomed. Thus, a shift began with the establishment of magnet schools that has yet to be curtailed. Local school districts, in accordance with the desires of sub-groups of constituents and individual families, created an alternative to the state and federal government's decision on how to segregate schools. While the alternative created by these constituencies worked within the parameters of *publicly* funded and governed institutions, the subtle shift toward school choice as a decision governed by families and other agencies, in direct response to a changing marketplace, had begun.

### **The Charter School Movement of the 1990's**

One of the major outcomes in this blossoming debate over public school choice, the charter school movement, began in the early 1990's, just over two decades after the implementation of magnet schools. Distinct from magnet schools, charter schools can be defined as;

a publicly funded school that is typically governed by a group or organization under a contract or charter with the state; the charter exempts the school from selected state or local rules and regulations. In return for funding and autonomy, the charter school must meet accountability standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 69).

Designed around the premise that once free from state and local regulations and allowed to function within the realm of capitalistic free market forces innovation in curriculum and pedagogy would follow, charter schools provided additional stimulus for those wanting choice beyond the pursuit of racial integration afforded through magnet schools.

In the landscape of public school reform and the school choice movement, the move toward charter schools also marked an important first step away from the entirely

government-controlled public schooling established in the U.S. by the common school movement of the 1840's.

Charter schools retain the critical features of public schools in that they must be non-selective in admissions, cannot charge tuition and are nonreligious.

Furthermore, these schools also retain at least some public accountability because of the provisions negotiated into their charters and because the charters must be renewed after a fixed period (typically, five years). However, unlike public schools, charter schools can be created by almost anyone and are highly autonomous since they are often exempt from some state and local regulations (Dee and Fu, 2004, p. 260).

This move marked the first time that public schooling was permitted to work outside the bounds of complete government oversight and marked another significant step in the progression of school choice in America. This step constituted a first and significant stride toward the privatization of public education – and a victory for privatization advocates – as public schools were now legally governed by private administrative boards.

Charters quickly began to compete with local attendance-zone and district magnet schools and vie for families in search of choice in public schooling. “The first charter schools opened in Minnesota during the 1992–93 school year. By the fall of 2000, nearly 2,000 charter schools were operating in 37 states and serving over a quarter-million students” (US Department of Education, 2002a; Nelson, Berman, et al., 2000). However, the proliferation of charter schools did not slow and “[by] the 2004–05 school year, there were 3,294 charter schools in the jurisdictions that allowed them (40 states and the District of Columbia) [and] . . . charter schools made up 4 percent of all public schools” (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 69).

When combined with the over 6.2 million, or 12.2 percent, of students whose families completely opted out of public education by pursuing private or home schooling – a number estimated at 5.1 million, or 10 percent, of students attending private schools (US Department of Education, 2007) and 1.1 million, or 2.2 percent, of students being homeschooled (US Department of Education, 2005) – the 15.4 percent of students whose families chose public schools other than their assigned attendance-zone school means that nearly 28% of all students are educated in a school of choice – a school other than the family’s assigned attendance-zone school. It then becomes apparent that these numbers provide substantial social capital to choice advocates as they push for even greater choice, including the use of vouchers, in the educational arena.

### **The Move Toward Vouchers**

Instead of fulfilling the public’s desire for choice in education, the satisfaction that families felt toward magnet and charter schools only seemed to increase school choice advocates’ desires for the move toward greater privatization and choice in schooling (see Olson, 2004 and Wolf, 2008). In fact, choice advocates in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries pursued even bolder expansion of choice programs.

In Minnesota, school choice was expanded to allow students to choose from public schools outside of the family’s immediate school district. This open-enrollment plan allowed “the state funds normally allocated for those who transfer [to] travel with them to the receiving school” (Henig, 1994, p. 112). In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, an even bolder initiative for local school districts – in cooperation with city and state lawmakers – moved public school choice toward a public/private school hybrid by allowing public funding to pay tuition at private schools. Not only did this represent a significant step

through the inclusion of private schools in school choice plans but, through diverting public funds to schools chosen by parents, also marked the first meaningful step toward providing a voucher system.

Under the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the approximately twenty-five hundred dollars of state funds per student that would normally go to the Milwaukee public school system [was] diverted to private schools in lieu of tuition. . . Although not literally a voucher program, since the state aid is sent directly to the schools, it functions like a voucher program and is frequently referred to by that label by supporters and opponents alike. *Newsweek* magazine, for instance, called the Milwaukee experiment ‘A Real Test for Vouchers (Henig, 1994, p. 113).

Finally, Cleveland, Ohio’s voucher program took another step in blurring the lines between public and private schooling as the plan included public funding for private *religious* schools (a strategy later adopted by an expanded Milwaukee program). In fact, “about 80% of families in the Cleveland program sent their children to Catholic and other parochial schools” (Carnoy, p. 9). The result of these programs is a growing groundswell of support for privatization of education through publicly funded vouchers that include funding for privately governed, often religious, schools.

While the debate over communal values and the role of public, private, and private religious education goes on, it is important to remember that, ultimately, “a deep understanding of how choice affects integration requires much more than merely counting students in schools” (Ogawa and Dutton, 1994, p. 132) and that segregation of schools takes into account more than just the percentages of minorities who are either assigned to an attendance-zone school or choose an alternative to their local school.

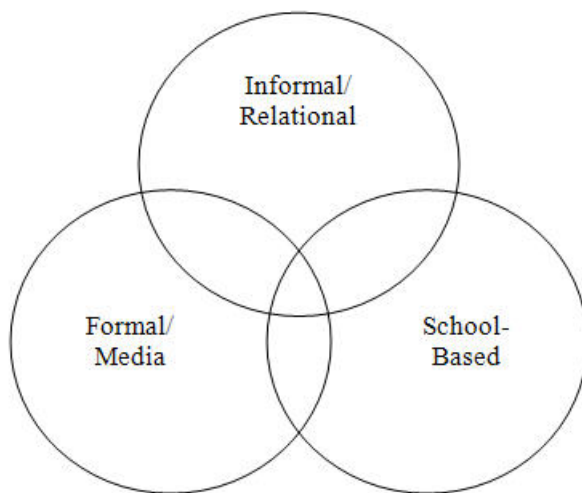
The following sections summarize literature related particularly to the three research questions addressed in this study. Specifically, these sections will examine the sources and types of information choosers' use in the school choice process, parents' reasons for choice, and parents' reasons for exiting a school of choice.

### **Sources and Types of Information Choosers Use**

While the school choice movement continues to gain momentum – providing parents with inroads into educational governance and funding mechanisms, a significant source of concern within the debate is the availability and use of information. In fact, “a critical factor influencing parental choice behavior is the quality of information available to parents” (Viteritti, 1999, p. 46) and “a central mechanism in this ‘test of equity’ involves providing information that is both accessible to and understandable by all parents, and that allows parents (not just the most sophisticated and well-educated) to make informed decisions about where their children will go to school” (Smrekar and Goldring, 1999, p. 26). The installation of school-based Information Centers early in the magnet school movement, for example, was the direct result of choice advocates responding to critics of choice who argued that the lack of meaningful and accessible information regarding school choice was discriminatory toward racial/ethnic minorities and the poor.

There are numerous nuances in the arguments relating to the dissemination, availability, and usability of information in the educational arena. There are issues of cost and incentive for schools to make it a point to effectively communicate with all potential choosers. “Families unaware of [choice schools] are likely to be the most expensive to inform” (Archbald, 1988, p. 224) and, as long as the choice school's enrollment meets the

school's desired levels, there is little incentive – and heightened risk – in informing these families at all. For example, “information equalizing awareness of [choice schools] could diminish [their] specialness by lowering barriers to access and increasing the proportion of applications from families less likely to support academic achievement and the [choice schools'] specialized programs. . . Surely the incentive to risk this is not that strong” (Archbald, 1988, p. 225). Despite these nuances and potential pitfalls, a major factor that lies at the heart of the argument over information regarding school choice is which sources of information parents use to effectively choose a school and whether or not these sources are equally available and understandable for all parents, regardless of socio-economic, racial, and educational status. An additional and equally central factor in the debates is the ability, then, of parents to make a rational choice based on the available information.



*Figure 2.2. Sources of Information*

Borrowing loosely from research related to the use of information in the political realm (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1944; Price and Zaller, 1993), educational

information can be pooled into three primary sources – informal/relational, formal/media-based, and school-based (see Figure 2.2). While organizing this information may require a more precise delineation like that outlined below in Table 2.1, sources of information are much more fluid and can overlap as shown in a Venn diagram (see Figure 2.2).

*Table 2.1. Sources of Educational Information for Parental Choosers (Delineated)*

Types of Information	Sources	Strengths	Weaknesses
Informal/ Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Extended family</li> <li>• Families in schools</li> <li>• Co-workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of trust in the source</li> <li>• Less “costly” for chooser in terms of time and energy spent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not always accurate</li> <li>• Social networks are culturally/socially bound</li> <li>• Favor higher-income, more educated, families</li> </ul>
Formal/Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Television</li> <li>• Radio</li> <li>• Newspaper</li> <li>• Community Centers</li> <li>• Politicians</li> <li>• Internet/ Web-based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to reach many people simultaneously</li> <li>• Multiple forms available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scarce in terms of educational information</li> <li>• Questionable reliability</li> <li>• Need for choosers to have access to electronic media or have high level of literacy skills</li> </ul>
School-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brochures</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> <li>• Web-pages</li> <li>• Application materials</li> <li>• Staff/ administration</li> <li>• PTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important factual and procedural information</li> <li>• Creates connection between family and school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biased in favor of school</li> <li>• Propaganda</li> <li>• Extensive “red tape”</li> <li>• Language usually technical or advanced</li> <li>• Intimidating – especially for younger and less educated parents</li> </ul>

For example, while informal/relational sources of information usually are limited to family and friends, formal/media sources may include politicians, and school-based sources include teachers and/or members of PTA. Consequently, it is possible that a chooser of educational services might have a personal relationship with a member of the media, a political figure, or someone employed or otherwise connected to schools. Therefore, the sources of information overlap. Similarly, a member of the media may provide information through radio, television, or other media sources, but the information included in the piece may have as its genesis a school-based source of information like a superintendent, board member or Information Center staff member. Again, in such a case, the lines between the sources of information are somewhat blurred. However, it is helpful



in gathering and analyzing data to have more rigid and well-defined areas of delineation when dealing with the data itself, and therefore, a table like Table 2.1 is helpful in the data gathering and analysis process.

### *Informal/Relational Sources of Information*

Informal educational information is information provided through relational connections such as extended family, neighbors, co-workers, or other families with children in the schools. This information is readily available to most choosers and is clearly less “costly” to the chooser in terms of time and energy spent because this information comes through the use of social networks, which is less complicated than sifting through brochures, web-pages, applications, and other more formal sources of information. The popularity of using social networks as a primary source of information among parents researching schools is well documented. Using survey data collected from parents in Cincinnati and St. Louis, for example, Smrekar and Goldring (1999) found that “in total, across all social classes, parents use social networks as a source of information about school choice more often than they use information formally disseminated” (p. 35-36).

One reason for the popularity and universal appeal of using social networks, in addition to them being less costly, may be the perception that informal/relational sources of information are assumed to be less biased and more trustworthy than school-based or media information. As one young mother quoted by Smrekar and Goldring (1995) explains, “Word of mouth is probably still the best way to get information that you trust” (p. 45). Certainly, interaction with family and friends carries with it a higher level of trust in the information being shared than the information shared by a school district or media

outlet which can be seen as overwhelming, biased, or devoid of information that may carry with it negative implications. For example, when schools design an information system to share with the public, “the design of the information system [may focus] on specific attributes of schools [or send] an implicit message that certain characteristics are considered more important than others” (Betts and Loveless, 2005, p 55) – leaving other, less complimentary, information out of the information being given families.

One consistent and major finding that accentuates the downside of using informal/relational sources of information, however, is its potential inequity. “Higher-income parents [have] higher quality ties to information networks than [do] lower-income parents – thus, the concerns of critics that school choice will exacerbate social class differences may have an empirical foundation” (Schneider, et. al., 2000, p. 112). Smrekar and Goldring (1999) echo this concern when they state, “Higher income families are more likely than lower-income families to use discussion with friends and teachers as sources of information” (p. 36). The result, then, is that higher-income families have greater access to quality information through their social networks and use this source of information more frequently than do lower-income families. It all equates to higher-income families receiving higher quality information at less cost to themselves than information received by their lower-income counterparts. In addition, while qualitative data like that gathered through the use of informal networks can be a very reliable resource for higher-income, more educated choosers, lower-income families, using the same strategy of social networking for gathering information, receive less reliable data about the quality of schools they are considering. Therefore, in the end, “parents with lower levels of education, as well as African-American and Hispanic parents . . . are more

likely to rely on formal sources of information, such as the media” (Betts and Loveless, 2005, p. 47) than they are on informal/relational sources of information gathered through social networking.

### *Formal/Media Sources of Information*

Formal/media information includes information received from media outlets like radio, television, the internet, and print media. These formal sources of information do go beyond mass media, however, and can include “community centers and politicians” (Schneider, et. al. 2000, p. 113). This type of information is distinguishable from the informal/relational sources discussed above as it is relatively impersonal in nature.

Overall, however, and in comparison to similar information sources related to areas like politics and popular culture, “not much information about school performance is carried in the mass media” (Schneider, et. al., 2000, p. 112), perhaps making this informational source of questionable reliability. However, formal/media sources of information do include strengths for choosers of education. As with other areas that utilize formal/media information, the ability to reach a large number of constituents simultaneously through mass media – print or electronic – makes this form of information very cost effective for the school district. Also, if done well, choosers can gather a good deal of information in a very short period of time through 30 or 60 second commercials, for example.

One seemingly straightforward data point for formal/media sources to cite – and, therefore, perceived by choosers as a real strength of this particular information source – are standardized test scores. The scores are a simple formal/media source to present and, because the numerical scores are perceived to be without bias, they provide choosers with

a reference of the “highest achieving” schools. As we will see in the next section, standardized scores are also an oft-cited tool in school-based information sources.

### *School-Based Sources of Information*

The third source of information, school-based sources, focus on school newsletters, web-pages, brochures, school information centers, application material, open houses/visits to schools, and interaction with persons associated with the district like staff, PTA members, teachers, and administrators. There is a close link between school-based information and formal/media sources of information as schools will often use formal, mass media tools to get their message to the public. “Research in parent information centers indicates that a critical element in ensuring that parents and children use the centers fully is an intense effort by those who manage the centers to reach every family in the community, through mailings, radio and television announcements, posters, and visits to churches, nursery schools, laundromats, shopping centers, and other locales where families are likely to gather” (Cookson, 1994, p. 136).

As mentioned above in relation to informal/relation sources of information, lower-income families whose social networking connections are usually less trustworthy rely on information provided by the district more often than do higher-income families whose social networking connections provide more reliable information. At their best, parent information centers, for example, “are community resources that bring schools and families together and act as benign brokers of educational choice” (Cookson, 1994, p. 136). Smrekar and Goldring (1999) add that “low-income families utilize school newsletters at a higher rate than do higher-income families” (p. 44). However, school-based information is often limited in scope as “it is factual, procedural information,

aimed at managing the logistical problems created by choice” (Archbald, 1988, p. 55). Printed, web-based, and other mass communications typical of school-based information does supply, as Archbald states, “factual, procedural information,” but it can also be considered by families to be incomplete and, therefore, “much information is disseminated through telephone calls and face-to-face conversations between parents and school people, mainly principals and guidance counselors” (1988, p. 59) as parents express the need for a more personal touch in the choice process and answers to specific questions related to their family’s unique needs and desires.

School districts can invest much in terms of financial and human resources in providing these sources of information to choosers of schools. Such investment in informational outreach strategies was reported in research conducted in 1994 by the American Institutes for Research in a study prepared for the U.S. Department of Education. In researching the dissemination of information related to magnet schools, the study found that, “A wide range of strategies was employed by [districts receiving federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program funds]” (American Institutes for Research, p. 44). These strategies included:

distribution of information or applications to students (95 percent), printed brochures (92 percent), and information or applications mailed to parents who request it (86 percent), followed by planned visits and tour sessions for parents or students at the magnet schools without transportation (79 percent), presentations at other schools by magnet teachers or students (70 percent), and formal advertising in local media (64 percent). Relatively few districts routinely sent information or application forms to all parents (39 percent) or provided transportation for those visiting magnet schools (32 percent) (American Institutes for Research, p. 44).

One district, the Cambridge, Massachusetts district – where “one high school and fourteen elementary schools enroll 8,053 students” (Petronio, 1996, p. 5) – set out to use magnet schools as a way to provide the district with a voluntary desegregation plan. The district reported in 1992 that “direct choice costs which include transportation, informational literature and salaries of the Parent Information staff, [were] estimated at \$1.4 million” (Petronio, 1996, p. 7). While the financial and human resources invested in the dissemination of information continues to be significant, choice advocates acknowledge that “without investment in these centers, the process of school choice becomes chaotic, uninformed, and potentially destructive to children” (Cookson, 1994, p. 136).

A major drawback in relying on school-based information, however, is that it can be very intimidating for a significant portion of minority, lower-income, and less educated populations to gather the information. “For parents whose educational experiences were unhappy, unsuccessful, or short-lived, the idea of expanding the channels of communication with the district, the school, or an individual teacher in the process of exploring the [school] option may represent a formidable obstacle to choice” (Smrekar and Goldring, 1999, p. 45).

Another potential drawback of school-based sources of information is that they can be seen by choosers as biased in favor of the school and, therefore, unreliable for choosers. To counteract this drawback, many schools, especially if the data are favorable, will use standardized test scores throughout the information they disseminate. Just as in the use of test scores by formal/media sources of information and mentioned above, test scores appear to choosers as unbiased and, therefore, schools choose to emphasize these

scores in their school-based information sources – like school websites, newsletters, and brochures.

However, as an example of how sources of information can overlap, as the Venn Diagram in Figure 2.2 shows – schools often prepare press releases that include test scores and other information for use in formal/media outlets. These releases then emerge in newspapers and websites and appear to the consumer to be news or special interest stories presented by an “unbiased” third party. However, the information has really been prepared by the school – therefore, a school-based source of information – but takes on the appearance of a formal/media source of information, instead.

As one can see, each of these three information types have both strengths and weaknesses in providing parents with information. “To the extent that different types of parents rely on different forms of information, there is a risk that choice may lead to stratification by parent education level. . . At the same time, research suggests that choice creates incentives for parents to gather information that may eventually reduce inequities if efforts are made to ensure easy access to the information” (Betts and Loveless, 2005, p. 47).

### **Parents’ Reasons for Choice**

Imbedded in families’ search for information, what types of information schools should provide, and what sources of information are most effective in the choice process is the question, “Why do parents choose a particular school over others?”

Discovering families’ reasons for choice of school is important in evaluating the potential of school choice programmes to lead to improvement in schooling. If parents are choosing for academic reasons, then choice may provide the impetus for changes in teaching and learning. If, on the other hand parents are choosing

because of convenience/proximity [or other non-academic reasons] it is unlikely that choice will be a driving force for school improvement. (Goldring and Hausman, 1999, p. 472)

This question, why do parents choose, is more complex than it might appear at first blush, as Goldring and Hausman intimate. Many casual observers might conclude that academic excellence or student achievement is the best indicator of reasons for school choice. To some extent this is certainly the case, but a more complete understanding of why parents choose shows the reasons to be far more complex.

When asked what factors contribute to their decisions about where to send their children to school, most parents rank educational quality at or near the top. When families that use vouchers are asked about the reasons for that decision, academic quality is typically cited as the most important reason, though religion and cultural values often rank high as well. Results from a survey of charter school choosers indicate that educational quality and small class size were among the top factors cited by parents of all racial and income groups (Betts and Loveless, 2005, p. 42)

Betts and Loveless highlight in the work cited above that parents, when surveyed, sight academic quality as a major reason for choice in nearly every scenario. However, in the data, other variables are mentioned by parents as reasons for their educational choices – including religion, culture, and class size.

Goldring and Rowley (2006) provide data that concurs with Betts and Loveless. In school choice related to private schools, parent choice behavior can be driven by areas in conjunction with or in addition to academics. “[The] literature indicates parents choose private schools for their academic and curricula emphases, discipline, and safety” (p. 3). Goldring and Rowley (2006) also indicate that the choice process in public schools can involve issues other than academic outcomes. Research in this area, they conclude,



“indicates that there is a social class creaming as parents with wider social networks and more access to information are more likely to participate in the choice process” (p. 4).

However, when examining what parents *do* in the choice process, not just what they *say*, interesting data are available that suggests social creaming, networking, race, ethnic background, and socioeconomic status are, at the very least, equally involved in the choice process as academic quality is. “Parents may, for various reasons be unlikely to report [through the use of surveys] that they factor race or their own personal convenience into their school selection criteria . . . [but] some analyses of actual school choice behavior point to different results than those obtained through surveys, particularly with respect to parents’ reported emphasis on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status” (Betts and Loveless, 2005, p. 43).

When viewed as a whole, inherent in these “other” reasons for why parents choose schools is clearly the culture of the school – of which academic quality is only one measure among many. Race, socioeconomic status, discipline strategies, safety, and religion – even an emphasis on extra-curricular activities like athletics and the arts – are all examples of cultural aspects of schools and, when closely scrutinized, appear to drive parental choice behavior just as much, if not more than, academic quality.

It should also be noted that parents choose alternate educational opportunities because they are unhappy with the school where their children are currently enrolled. Exit, as a parental strategy in school choice, will be examined more closely in the section below titled Parents Reasons for Exiting Schools of Choice, but it bears mentioning here that dissatisfaction can be a significant factor in the “why’s” of family school choice behavior. As Witte (1990) notes, “If there is anyone who does not believe there is power

in [the prospect of exit as an influencer of school choice behavior], I would suggest they consider the general demise of urban schools as middle class parents have voted with their feet” (p. 40).

### **Rational Choice Theory as a Framework for How Parents Choose**

A common theoretical underpinning in the literature regarding school choice that also provides a framework for how parents choose is Rational Choice Theory (RCT). RCT provides several benefits to research, in general, including the benefit – as is the case in other deductive theories – that “the value of a deductive theory is in its power to predict” (Rada, 1988). It should also be noted that within this paper’s research, in particular,

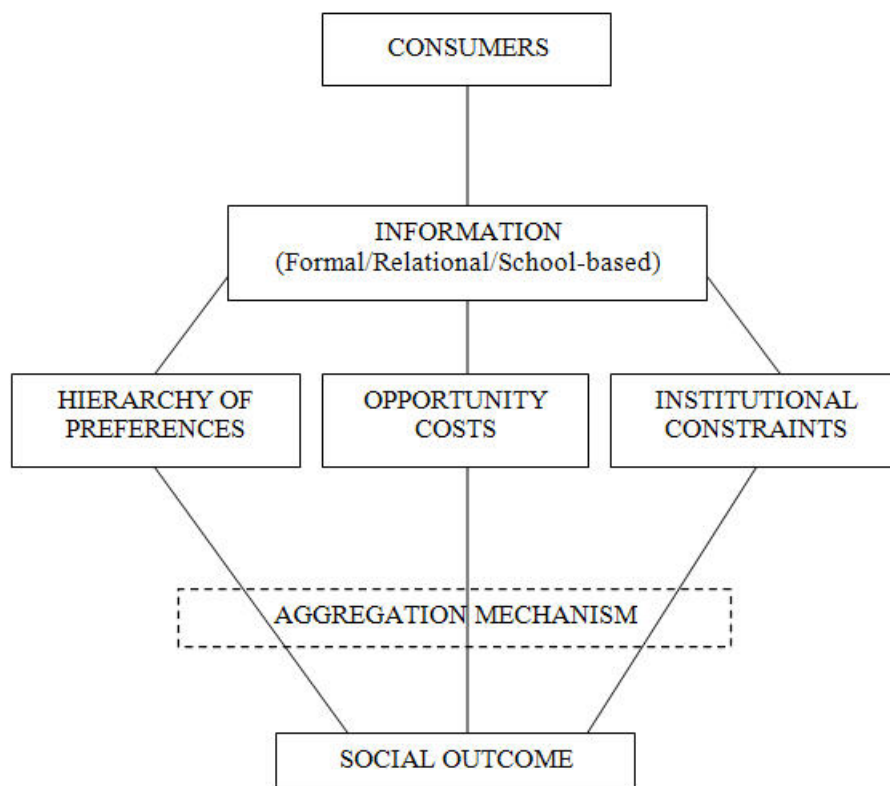
rationality is used in the economic sense, rather than the psychological or logical sense. People making rational decisions weigh their costs against their benefits. Costs include much more than money: Time, disruption of family life . . . and other things can be costly. Benefits might include money, power, and prestige. Given a set of alternatives for a particular decision, and the cost and benefits of each alternative, rational people rank order their preferences among the alternatives, and choose the alternative that provides them the greatest utility (p. 227-228).

In addition, regarding school choice RCT suggests that

individual families that exercise their right to make choices rationally weigh the various alternatives in conjunction with their own values and preferences. Rational Choice Theory implies that parents reflect on their values and the needs of their children and articulate their preferences through choices they make. . . Rational choice theory assumes that the consideration of alternatives occurs with accurate and adequate information (Smrekar and Goldring, 1999, p. 26-27).

Because, as the last sentence in the quote above accentuates, information is an inherently critical variable in making rational decisions for RCT to be even minimally

effective, parents must, at the very least, be made aware, through the dissemination and sharing of all types of information that choices exist beyond their attendance-zone school. Figure 2.3, adapted from Friedman and Hechter (2008), clearly demonstrates the central role that information plays in Rational Choice Theory. All decision-making that filters through the hierarchy of preferences, potential costs and benefits, and systemic constraints of consumers – whom Friedman and Hechter call “actors” – must result from information to which consumers have access. “Initially, rational choice models assumed that actors had perfect or sufficient information necessary for making purposive choices among alternative courses of action. In much of the most recent work, however, the quantity and quality of available information is taken to be a variable, and a highly significant one at that” (Friedman and Hechter, 1988). Whether parents seek to choose a school because of academic achievement, special services, a particular cultural, religious, or ethnic environment, convenient location, or any other reason; accurate, timely, and meaningful information is essential in order to make rational choices.



*Figure 2.3. The Various Paths to Social outcomes in Rational Choice Explanations (adapted from Friedman and Hechter, 1998, p. 202)*

Herein, then, is the linchpin – the central role of information and the meaning consumers glean from that information – between the theoretical framework provided by Rational Choice Theory and the analysis of data relating to the first two questions of this research: “What sources and types of information do choosers use that result in successful enrollment in a private, non-denominational Christian School?” and “What are parents’ reasons for choosing a private, non-denomination Christian School?”

#### *Other Potential Market Theories Related to Educational Choice*

In general, when applied to education, “‘market theory’ presumes diverse individual preferences that are neglected in necessarily uniform public provision, [and]

because public schools are shielded from market discipline and are not accountable to their consumers” (Lubienski, 2003, p. 398), there are market-based theories other than Rational Choice Theory that could potentially be utilized in this research. However, when scrutinized, the reasons for bypassing them in favor of RCT become recognizable.

One such theory is Public Choice Theory which “(also known as collective choice and public economy) is a relatively new field of study” (Rada, 1988, p. 226). Mueller (1979) defines Public Choice Theory as “. . . the economic study of nonmarket decision making, or simply the application of economics to political science” (p. 1). Theoretically, when focusing on the power of smaller communities to invoke change and innovation in education,

public choice theorists would see such communities as homogenous preference clusters that best respond to aggregated preferences while reducing friction and conflict over such issues in the wider context (e.g., Chubb & Moe, 1990). And when this local, decentralized form of provision fails to meet the diverse needs of consumers, they have the right or responsibility to seek satisfaction of education preferences elsewhere - thereby holding publicly funded providers accountable to users through the threat or exercise of an exit option not available in pupil assignment schemes (Lubienski, 2003, p. 398).

In other words, those who espouse Public Choice Theory for educational settings see it as a framework which, among other things, links communities to the decision-making of those charged with the leadership of their education systems. Importantly for public choice theorists, when school leadership fails to take into account the desires of consumers within these communities, such consumers will have the threat of exit from these schools available to them. Central to the theory’s viability, then, is that idea that public education monopolies over individual family’s educational choices – like, they

would argue, the monopolies currently in use in much of the United States – must be “decentralized” so that consumers “have the right or responsibility to seek satisfaction of education preferences elsewhere” (Lubienski, 2003, p. 398). Unless this caveat is available to consumers, then the threat of exit and the resultant leverage for consumers in their desire to promote change, innovation, and satisfaction through choice in education, is effectively eliminated.

While Public Choice Theory looks promising, especially its focus on the application of economics to nonmarket areas such as education, as well as the application of decentralized authority to allow consumer choice in schooling, “few studies of . . . education employ methods from public choice, and most of these focus on educational politics at state and national levels” (Rada, 2003, p. 227). The scarcity of Public Choice Theory in the literature related specifically to education poses a problem, therefore, as does the fact that even the limited literature available in such a context is focused on the macro level of educational governance. In addition and because at the heart Public Choice Theory is an attempt to understand “the [concept] of democracy” (Mitchell, 1978, p. 76) – a concept of involvement not a concept of exit – couching this paper’s research within such a theoretical framework is impractical.

Essentially, because this paper’s research focuses on familial, local, and district educational choice (as compared to state and national issues related to choice that are the focus of Public Choice Theory currently applied to education) and has less to do with the democratic interaction between consumers and elected school officials than with consumers using exit from the process altogether as a way to communicate their

displeasure, Public Choice Theory has limited application to the research conducted herein.

### **Parents' Reasons for Exiting Schools of Choice**

As mentioned above, one of the hallmarks of market theory in education, in general, is not only the ability for consumers to choose what school to enter, but that consumers “have the right or responsibility to seek satisfaction of education preferences elsewhere – thereby holding . . . providers accountable to users through the threat or exercise of an exit option not available in pupil assignment schemes (Lubienski, 2003, p. 398). While volumes of research can be found in the literature regarding how and why parents initially choose schools for their children to attend, far less literature focuses on the specific area related to parents’ reasons for exiting schools as a method of choice behavior.

There is not a complete silence on the matter, but most often the idea of exit is merely alluded to as a factor in school choice behavior. Uncovering in-depth analysis and data is more difficult. Hamilton and Guin, for example, provide the following in their chapter titled “Understanding How Families Choose Schools.”

Researchers list several conditions that must be in place for parents to make good choices [in choosing a school]. Parents must: have preferences about education and schooling and gather information about the schools available to their children, make trade-offs between the attributes of these schools, and choose the school that best fits their preferences (Betts and Loveless, 2005, p. 41).

Then, almost as an afterthought, the authors immediately add, “In addition, once a school is selected, parents must monitor its progress *and seek a new school* if they decide the original choice was not correct” (Betts and Loveless, 2005, p. 41, *italics* added). To reinforce the premise that exit is an afterthought in the discussion regarding parents’

school choice behavior, note that the other eighteen pages of the chapter fail to mention “seeking a new school,” or any other exit related processes, at all. As an aside, it is also quite interesting to note the type of language Hamilton and Guin use in their description of school choice behavior by parents. Perhaps unknowingly, their discussion of parent’s “preferences about education and schooling”, “gather[ing] information,” “trade-offs between attributes,” and choosing the school “that best fits their preferences” incorporates the foundational principles of Rational Choice Theory discussed above and pictured in Figure 2.3.

In examining this powerful and oft-overlooked subject of exit an effective theoretical framework in which to situate data is Hirschman’s Exit, Voice, and Loyalty Theory (Hirschman, 1970). Klein (1980) explains the Exit portion of the theory as:

the response to deteriorating performance by a firm (or public service organization) . . . by the consumers. That is, consumers take their custom elsewhere, so giving the required alarm signals to the firm (or organization) to improve its product or service. If the alarm signals are heeded, then the performance will pick up again. If they are ignored, the firm or organization will go out of business, and its products or services will be provided by others (p. 417).

Of course, what makes exit so powerful is that it immediately removes the source of income and influence that buoys the organization in the first place. However, the power associated with exit comes with an important caveat. Namely, “firms (or organizations) may actually welcome the exit of particularly demanding customers, and . . . exit may, in other words, inhibit complaints” (Klein, 1980, p 418-419) because, among other things, those who exit may lack the loyalty to voice their concerns and remain connected to the organization long enough to realize an agreeable response.



In the highly competitive and open-market nature of private education the use of Hirschman's theory – especially his ideas related to exit – can be a central premise. As such, it will be used to analyze data related to this paper's third research question – What are parents' reasons for choosing to exit the school? The author does not mean to ignore the power of voice and loyalty in driving parental school choice behavior as the author believes this could be a significant foundation for further research. It should be noted that Hirschman himself considers voice a more powerful force in leading to organizational change and, in turn, customer satisfaction, than does exit. "In the large portion of my book which was an essay in persuasion on behalf of voice I argued that voice can and should complement and occasionally supersede exit. . . I now find that my advocacy of voice was not exaggerated, but, on the contrary, too timid" (Hirschman, 1980, p. 431). Interestingly, and as a word of caution to businesspersons/economists turned educators, "economist's bias against voice and in favor of exit" (Hirschman, 1980, p. 448) serves to stifle the feedback loop available through the use of voice and essential for the health of public service organizations – like schools – in favor of the retention of power by those in leadership and a maintaining of the status quo.

Having said that, however, it is important to note that in the context of this paper's research the author seeks only to measure parental reasons for exit – not parental reasons to use voice and loyalty as a means of influence for school governance while remaining enrolled in the school. Therefore, this research focuses solely on exit within Hirschman's theoretical construct.

### *Other Potential Theories Related to Exit*

There are other potential frameworks for the interaction between consumers and school governance, and the resultant exit of consumers from schools of choice. However, each of these theories shares the same theoretical limitations as Hirschman's Voice component in his Exit, Voice and Loyalty theory, especially in terms of its application to this particular study: the assumption of continual consumer connectedness with their school through various forms of interaction instead of the assumption of removal from the formal process of the school altogether through exit.

Public Choice Theory, mentioned in the previous section, is one of these potential frameworks, as is Decision-Output theory. Decision-Output theory "examines relationships between inputs (demands and resources) on a school governance system and outputs (programs and policy) of that system" (Alsbury, 2003, p. 668). While similar in context to weaknesses of Public Choice Theory – where the measurement of the relationship between exiters who may (or may not) have made demands of or provided resources to schools is central, this theory does have other weaknesses that preclude it from use in this study. A primary weakness is that the theory's "predictive power is quite limited" (Rada, 1988, p 226). Also limiting to the application of the theory to this research, and similar to the limitation in using Public Choice Theory as a framework, is the idea that "Decision-Output theory includes the possibility for local citizens to influence their school governance through school board elections" (Rada, 1988, p. 226). Again, because the focus of this research is not on the ability of consumers to influence school governance and decision-making through active participation – such as elections – but through an exit from participation altogether, Decision-Output Theory would be a mismatched theoretical framework to utilize.

An additional theoretical framework, in addition to Public Choice and Decision-Output theories, that also has the potential for use in a study such as this is Dissatisfaction Theory. “[Dissatisfaction] Theory's major contribution to the study of school governance [and, in contrast to one of the weaknesses of Decision-Output theory,] is its power to predict. By examining data longitudinally, dissatisfaction theorists have pieced together a set of relationships that are useful in explaining and predicting events in school governance” (Rada, 1988, p. 226). More specifically, the theorists “have found that a change in the socioeconomic makeup of a community can lead to a gap in values between the school board and the community” (Rada, 1988, p. 226) which, ultimately, leads to turnover in leadership and redirection of the school. “Dissatisfaction theorists have [also pointed] out that the absence of dissatisfaction is not the same as satisfaction. They only claim that when the public is dissatisfied enough it becomes politically active and throws the rascals out. This process, they assert, is the democratic process. They do not claim that those not dissatisfied and not participating are satisfied” (Lutz, 1985, p. 442).

NOTE: \*Theoretical variables as described by Reed and Johnson-Howard (1989).

Change in School Board Member Values\*

-defeat or forced retirement or resignation of incumbent school board member(s)



Change in Community Values\*

-resulting in growing community dissatisfaction



Change in Community Participation\*

-at a sufficient level of community dissatisfaction, there is an increase of community involvement at local school elections challenging incumbent school board members



Change in Community Participation\*

-after incumbent school board member defeat, the superintendent is replaced. The new superintendent changes school policy to be in more alignment with new community values.

*Figure 2.4. Expected Sequence of Events Demonstrating Community Participation in Changing School Policy as Theorized by the Dissatisfaction Theory of Democracy*

However, just as with the Voice component in Hirschman's Exit, Voice and Loyalty, Dissatisfaction Theory is less aligned with the specific questions of this research. As mentioned above, Dissatisfaction Theory is directed more toward "the major events in school governance" (Rada, 1988, p. 226) – like the turnover of incumbent school board members and the resultant removal of superintendents, for example – and

involves how consumers *remain connected* with the school in order to promote change. As point two in Figure 2.4, borrowed from Alsbury (2003), clearly illuminates, Dissatisfaction Theory posits that a change in community values leads directly to a change in community participation and that change is marked by an *increase* in involvement of consumers through the voicing of their discontent – in this example by voting in such a way that challenges incumbent school board members.

However, just as with the Voice component of Hirschman's theory, Dissatisfaction Theory is less desirable than Hirschman's Exit component because it focuses on how consumers stay connected to the school in their attempt to influence decision-making. Contrastingly, and at the risk of repeating it too often, the focus of this research is on families that have chosen to *disconnect* themselves from the school through exit and the various other theories considered for use in this research assume a continued connection between consumers of school choice and the school itself.

### **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

In order to reorient the reader, this study seeks to better understand the reasons for parental choice of an independent, non-denomination Christian school and, when applicable, parents' decision to exit the school before completion of the school's program. Literature related to school choice from community-based public schools, magnet and charter schools, and private/parochial/religious schools, as well as literature related to Rational Choice Theory and Hirschman's Exit, Voice, and Loyalty Theory will provide the empirical and theoretical framework for the study. It is from this literature and the use of surveys directed to families enrolled in a private, non-denominational Christian school that the author seeks to provide data related to the following three research questions:

4. What sources and types of information do choosers use that result in successful enrollment in a private, non-denominational Christian School?
5. What are parents' reasons for choosing a private, non-denominational Christian School?
6. What are parents' reasons for choosing to exit the school?

#### **Context of the Study**

Having been in operation for twenty years, Christian College Prep (CCP) is a private, non-denominational Christian school located in the affluent suburbs of a large Midwestern city – most of the school's students come from families of upper or upper-middle class status, with a small percentage coming from some of the wealthiest families in the United States. During the 2007-2008 school year, the school's tuition is \$10,600 for all grade levels. As a result of tuition costs and limited financial aide, CCP currently

has no students that, in a public school setting, would qualify for free or reduced lunch as the socio-economic demands would prevent these students from enrolling. In the 1989-1999 school year, its first year of operation, the school enrolled 165 students Kindergarten through grade 8 in one building while, as of 2007-2008, enrollment has swelled to over 1,200 students in three buildings on two separate campuses serving grades K-12. This makes CCP not only one of the largest private, nondenominational, Christian schools in the United States, but one of the largest independent schools as well.

The school is accredited by the Independent Schools Association of Central States (ISACS), is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), and belongs to its state's Association of Independent Schools. The school is also a member of the College Board as well as its state's High School Athletic Association.

Academically, all three buildings have been designated as Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education – the elementary school in 1997, the middle school in 2000, and the high school in 2002. In 2007-2008, the school produced six National Merit scholars. CCP also reports that 100% of its graduates have been accepted at four year colleges and universities.

Demographically, the school is predominantly Caucasian (82.4%), with African-American students (6.6%) comprising most of the racial/ethnic minority student population and other listed minorities (Asian, Hispanic/Latino, International – not a U.S. citizen, Middle Eastern, or Multi-Racial) comprising the balance (10.8%) of the racial/ethnic minority student population.

## **Data Collection**

Christian College Prep involved its parent population in two separate web-based surveys – one in the fall of 2007 and one in the spring of 2008 – from which the data for this research has been extrapolated. Surveys, in general, are “very popular, primarily for three reasons: versatility, efficiency and generalizability. . . Many doctoral dissertations use surveys [and] schools use surveys to evaluate aspects of the curriculum or administrative procedures” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006, p. 233). The use of surveys at CCP, as well as their inclusion in this research, provided the advantages of “reduced cost and time, quick response, easy follow-up, and the ability to survey a large population” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006, p. 239), which outweighed the disadvantages.

### *Surveys*

The first survey, CCP’s Marketing Survey (see Appendix A), conducted in the fall of 2007 with the assistance of an outside surveying agency, was a descriptive survey meant to assist the school in “developing a short and long term marketing plan for CCP” (CCP Head of School email cover letter, 2007). While the entirety of the survey is not applicable to this research, many of the questions are directly applicable and the data from these questions will be collected for analysis. The questions selected for use in the research are those where the purpose of the school’s surveys and the research questions overlap. Those questions designed to assist the school in discovering “how to best *communicate* with future CCP families” (CCP Head of School email cover letter, 2007, *italics mine*) where the questions also provide data for the researcher’s investigation discovering how families use communication and information in the process of school



choice, as well as parents reasons for choice, will be used. The first survey included 50 questions and required an average completion time of 20-30 minutes. The survey utilized forced-choice questions, forced-choice questions using a Likert scale, as well as open ended questions.

The second survey, CCP's Constituents' Survey (see Appendix B), a survey of CCP constituents that included feedback from parents, students, alumni, teachers, and administrators, was initially conducted by the school in the spring of 2004 and then repeated over a two-week period during the spring of 2008. Quoting again from the Head of School's initial 2007 email cover letter, "These [constituent] surveys keep us up to date on your CCP experience. The last survey [in 2004] helped us improve a number of aspects of school life and we are ready for additional feedback. Your responses will let us know how these changes have improved your experience and inform us of new areas where we can direct our attention." This second survey included 265 questions, focused on areas directly related to the school's 10 Core Values, and utilized forced-choice questions using a seven-point Likert scale. The survey took, on average, 45-55 minutes to complete. (Because of the extremely long nature of this survey, only the items used in this research are provided in Appendix B.) In terms of following an acceptable protocol, CCP included a personal cover letter from the Head of School describing the instructions, purpose, and context of the survey and both a follow-up letter/email to all of the target population and another letter emailed/mailed two weeks later to non-respondents (both of which had information/links to the survey). Because the surveys were distributed to the five different constituencies separately, disaggregating the data that derives from the

parent population alone will be uncomplicated. Also, for the purposes of this research, only the data from 2008 will be used.

Because the data from the second survey are meant in this research to investigate the attitudes of families who are exiting the school in comparison to those families that have chosen to reenroll (not the intent of the survey from the school's perspective), the data gathered from the constituent's survey will be analyzed in order to determine what, if any, statistically significant differences can be found between families who reenroll and those that exit.

CCP provided the data both from the larger population (n = parent respondents who are reenrolling) as well as from the smaller population (n = parent respondents who are exiting). The school did so by directing the person who is privy to the assignment of confidential identification numbers with parent names to disaggregate the data into two groups (families reenrolling and families exiting), and delete all personally identifiable variables. Therefore, the respondents remained confidential to the researcher and the need for and ability of the researcher to obtain consent from the respondents was eliminated.

### *Sample*

The target population for both surveys is the total number of families who have students currently enrolled in CCP schools (n=786). Each of these families received a copy of the surveys via the internet and was asked to participate. For the first survey, the sample response rate is 50% (n=393). For the second survey, the sample return rate is 36% (n= 283).

### *Establishing Population Validity*

Population validity, one of the primary measures of external validity in quantitative studies where “the results of a study can be generalized only to other people who have the same, or similar, characteristics as those used in the experiment” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006, p. 141), is established in both surveys. Using data from the entire CCP population as the benchmark, both the CCP Marketing Survey and the CCP Constituents Survey share the characteristics of the entire school population in terms of race/ethnicity, grade level of children attending the school, and annual household income.

*Table 3.1. Establishing Population Validity*

	Entire CCP Student Population	CCP Marketing Survey	CCP Constituents’ Survey
Race/Ethnicity	N=1221	N=393	N=283
Caucasian	82.4	92.5	86.9
African-American	6.6	4.8	9.2
Other listed minorities (Asian, Hispanic/Latino, International – not a U.S. citizen, Middle Eastern, or Multi-Racial)	10.8	2.5	3.9
Grade Level of Students Enrolled	N=1221	N=505	N=465
Elementary (K-4)	34.1	34.2	37.4
Middle School (5-8)	31.6	34.5	36.7
High School (9-12)	34.3	31.3	25.8
Annual Household Income	N=786	N=239	N=261
\$150,000-\$200,000	-	22.6	17.6
\$200,000 or higher	-	45.1	42.1

Christian College Prep, in terms of race/ethnicity, reports that 82.4% of the population are Caucasian, 6.6% are African American, and 10.8% are another listed minority (Asian, Hispanic/Latino, International – not a U.S. citizen, Middle Eastern, or Multi-Racial). In terms of grade level, CCP reports that the elementary population is 34.1, the Middle School population is 31.6%, and the High School population is 34.3% (See Table 3.1). Finally, in terms of annual household income, while the school does not

collect such data the high income reported by the survey respondents is comparable to the high incomes of those attending the school.

When comparing the respondents of the CCP Marketing Survey to the entire CCP population (See Table 3.1), it is clear that the subjects are similar in these three characteristics – race/ethnicity, grade level of children enrolled, and annual household income – to that population. Of the respondents that include their race/ethnicity on the survey (N=293), 92.5% are Caucasian, 4.8% are African American, and 2.5% are another listed minority. Those respondents that include the grade level of their children report that of the 505 students represented 34.2% are from the elementary school, 34.5% are from the Middle School, and 31.3% are from the High School. In terms of annual household income, respondents indicate 22.6% make between \$150,000 and \$200,000, 10% make between \$200,000 and \$250,000, and 35.1% make over \$250,000 (N=239) for a total of 67.7% of households that make \$150,000 or more per year.

Upon examination of the CCP Constituents' Survey, just as with the CCP Marketing Survey, it is also clear that the subjects are similar in the three characteristics mentioned above (See Table 3.1). The data from this survey relating to race/ethnicity show 86.9% are Caucasian, 9.2% are African-American, and 3.9% are other listed minorities. In terms of grade level of children enrolled at the school, the respondents report, of the 465 students represented, 37.4% are from the elementary school, 36.7% are from the middle school, and 25.8% are from the high school. Finally, respondents who include their annual household income (N=261) show 17.6% make between \$150,000 and \$199,999, and 42.1% make \$200,000 or higher for a total of 59.7% of households that make more than \$150,000 per year.

## *Methods*

In terms of the first survey, related to the types and sources of information used by families successfully enrolled at CCP, descriptive statistics including the mean and standard deviation were used to describe and rank order the means of the dependant variables. These dependent variables were determined by categorizing the data into the three sources of information described in the literature review and depicted in Figure 2.2 – informal/relational sources, formal/media sources, and school-based sources.

Similar to the methods related to answering research question one, and briefly specified immediately above, selected questions from the first survey – questions associated with parental reasons for choosing CCP – were used to answer research question two (What are parents’ reasons for choosing a private, non-denominational Christian School?) by rank ordering the means of the dependant variables.

The use of the second survey was designed to provide data related to research question three: “What are parent’s reasons for exiting the school?” The statistical method was independent sample t-tests and included two independent groups – families that reenrolled at CCP after the 2007-2008 school year and families that exited the school during or after the 2007-2008 school year. All analyses were conducted using SPSS 15.0.

### **Definition of Variables Related to Choice**

In seeking to answer the research question “What are parents’ reasons for choosing a private, non-denominational Christian School?”, just as in answering the first research question the research utilizes CCP’s Marketing Survey from the fall of 2007. The research related to reasons for choice combines items from q21 and q25 of the survey – both of which use a six-point Likert scale in asking families to rate the

importance of various aspects involved in their choice process. Q21 asks, “Please rate the following aspects of Christian College Prep in terms of their overall importance in your decision to choose CCP”, while q25 asks, “Please rate the importance of the following features/attributes of a school during your school selection process.” The “unsure” rating from the data has been dropped because it not ordinal, therefore, the means for these items are gathered on a five point scale from 1=Not Important at All to 5=Very Important. The reason for combining these two items is that although one asked specifically about the choice of CCP while the other asked for attributes of a school, in general they both emphasize CCP’s attributes compared to other schools that families consider during the choice process. In addition, there are items that overlap in the questions, but there are also items unique to each question. By combining the two, a clearer overall perspective of families’ reasons for choice is ascertainable.

The items from these two questions are organized into five factors – College Preparation, Christian Environment, Student-Teacher Ratio, Extra-Curriculars, and Advanced Teacher Preparation (see Table 4.7). The highest rated factor is Student-Teacher Ratio ( $M=4.69$ ,  $SD=.546$ ), followed by Christian Environment ( $M=4.38$ ,  $SD=.589$ ), College Preparation ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=.760$ ), Extra-Curriculars ( $M=3.74$ ,  $SD=.690$ ), and Advanced Teacher Preparation ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=.860$ ). Included in College Preparation ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=.760$ ) are six items – College Acceptance, Number of Advanced Placement Courses, Advanced Placement Exam Performance, Elementary School Stanford Achievement Scores, Average CCP Middle School Stanford Achievement Scores, and SAT Score Performance. These items are shown to be reliable by Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha=.881$ ). Included in Christian Environment ( $M=4.38$ ,  $SD=.89$ )

are five items – Biblical Integration in All Subjects, Faculty who Model Strong Christian Faith and Character Traits, High Degree of Parent Involvement, Weekly Chapel with High Student Involvement, and Spiritual Development. These items are shown to be reliable by Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha=.789$ ). Included in Student-Teacher Ratio ( $M=4.69$ ,  $SD=.546$ ) are two items – Teacher to Student Ratio and Average Class Size. These items are shown to be internally consistent by Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha=.898$ ). Included in Extra-Curriculars ( $M=3.74$ ,  $SD=.690$ ) are three items – Service Opportunities; High School Two-Week Winter Term Allowing for Missions, Service, and Experiential Learning; and Percent of Students Participating in Extra-Curricular Opportunities. The Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha=.514$ ) indicates these items are *not* as internally reliable as the other factors. While the  $\alpha$  is less than the desirable level of .70, the factor is still used based on face validity. The final of the five factors, Advanced Teacher Preparation ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=.860$ ), is comprised of two items – Percent of High School Faculty with Advanced Degrees and Percent of Faculty with Doctorates. The items are shown to be reliable by Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha=.774$ ).

### **Definition of Variables Related to Exit**

There are six factors related to the research question “What are parents’ reasons for choosing to exit the school? The six factors are Academic Factors, Spiritual Factors, Financial Factors, School Culture, Extra/Co-Curricular Factors, and Personnel. These factors are derived by organizing individual items from the CCP Constituents’ Survey into the variables described in Appendix C.

*Table 3.2. Internally Reliability of Factors Related to Exit*

Factors/Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Academic Factors	$\alpha=.845$
Rigor and Excellence	$\alpha=.910$
Biblical Integration	$\alpha=.841$
Spiritual Factors	$\alpha=.917$
Christ-centeredness	$\alpha=.806$
Spiritual Growth	$\alpha=.841$
Service/Outreach	$\alpha=.668$
Christian Studies	$\alpha=.903$
Financial Factors	$\alpha=.801$
Tuition*	
Relative Value to Other School Types	$\alpha=.856$
Fiscal Stewardship	$\alpha=.691$
School Culture	$\alpha=.924$
Discipline/Safety	$\alpha=.704$
Diverse Community	$\alpha=.775$
Physical Climate/Facilities	$\alpha=.710$
Communications	$\alpha=.802$
Sense of Community	$\alpha=.893$
Mission	$\alpha=.822$



Table 3.2 (continued)

Factors/Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Extra/Co-Curricular Factors	$\alpha=.735$
General Opportunities	$\alpha=.803$
Athletics	$\alpha=.840$
Fine Arts*	
Personnel	$\alpha=.908$
Principal	$\alpha=.884$
Teachers	$\alpha=.911$

\*No alpha as includes only a single item

Included in Academic Factors are fourteen (14) items with a Cronbach's alpha of .845. Academic Factors is comprised of two variables, Rigor and Excellence and Biblical Integration. The first variable, Rigor and Excellence, is defined as a school wide academic expectation that is exacting, challenging, and developmentally appropriate for a student body where college attendance is expected for all of its graduates. This variable, made up of seven items, has a Cronbach's alpha of .910. Sample items for this variable include "Academic excellence – meaning as an academy of learning it is our primary but not exclusive goal to prepare students academically for college and beyond," "The emphasis on academics is appropriate," and "Faculty use a variety of instructional strategies appropriate to their content area/grade level."

The second variable, Biblical Integration, is defined as purposefully and strategically imbedding in the curriculum a Biblical worldview and then challenging students through class discussion and formal and informal assessment to connect an understanding and knowledge of the content area/discipline with an understanding and

knowledge of the Bible. This variable, made up of seven items, has a Cronbach's alpha of .841. Sample items from the survey for this variable include "[The school] has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and English/Language Arts" and "[The school] has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and Science."

Included under Spiritual Factors are four variables with a combined Cronbach's alpha of .917. These variables focus on the culture of the school instead of the content of the school's academic offerings. The first variable, Christ-centeredness, is defined as "following how Christ himself led, served, taught, loved, and lived; we strive to base all we do on His word" (CCP Core Values statement). This variable, made up of eight items, has a Cronbach's alpha of .806. Sample items from the survey for this variable include "Every school employee that my student meets appears to have an obvious personal, active relationship with Jesus Christ," "CHCA has allocated sufficient financial and staffing resources toward the mission of being Christ-centered," and "Faculty demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principles in interaction with students and each other."

The second variable under Spiritual Factors, Spiritual Growth, is defined as programs – outside of the classroom (not including service opportunities and programs) – that CCP sponsors to positively influence and allow members of the community to understand their personal commitment to Jesus Christ and the Christian lifestyle. This variable, consisting of three items, has a Cronbach's alpha of .841. The items from the survey for this variable include: "The Chapel programs engage my student in ways that encourage a relationship with and growth in Christ," "CCP provides spiritual growth and

spiritual leadership opportunities for my student,” and “CCP helps students grow spiritually.”

The third variable included in Spiritual Factors, Service/Outreach, is defined as, “Believing in the power of servanthood, servant leadership will be taught, modeled and encouraged to all students, staff and parents so that all are equipped for the situations in life that God calls them to lead (CCP Core Values statement). The Cronbach’s alpha for this variable is .668. There were two items in the survey that were used for this variable: “Modeling Christ in all we do, we will provide opportunity daily and through special events for students, staff, and parents to share Christ’s love through service and witness to others” and “Service Program has a positive impact on spiritual life.”

The fourth and final variable included under Spiritual Factors is Christian Studies. Although an academic offering at the school, the items utilized for this variable focus not on the content of the course as measured through assessment and knowledge of the material, but, instead, focus on the course’s effect on the spiritual growth and Christian lifestyle of the students. Cronbach’s alpha for this variable is .903. There are three items included in this variable that includes, “The Christian Studies program helps my student develop appropriate value for Scripture” and “Christian Studies have a positive impact on spiritual life.”

Included under Financial Factors are three variables with a combined Cronbach’s alpha of .801. The first variable, Tuition, is defined as the cost per student to attend CCP, not including any associated fees for extra-curriculars such as athletic fees or costs for school trips. This variable was comprised of a single item – “CCP provides high value for the cost of tuition” and, therefore, does not have a Cronbach’s alpha.

The second variable included in Financial Factors, Relative Value to Other School Types, is defined as a respondent's perception of the overall per student value – when *all* costs are included – of attending CCP as compared to the per student value for attending other types of schools, public or private. The Cronbach's alpha for this variable is .856. Among the four items included in this variable are, "The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to Catholic Christian schools," "The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to private non-Christian schools," and "The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to public schools."

The third variable within Financial Factors, Fiscal Stewardship, is defined as "Acknowledging we are blessed in many ways, we as a school will model strong fiscal stewardship and will encourage, train and expect students, staff and parents to be wise and generous stewards over their time, talents, and money" (CCP Core Values statement). Cronbach's alpha for this variable, which includes three items, is .691. Items in this variable include "I understand how the funds that are contributed in the annual giving campaign are utilized" and "I understand the need for and uses of endowment funding."

Included in the factor titled School Culture are six variables with a combined Cronbach's alpha of .924. The first variable, Discipline/ Safety, is defined by a school environment that is safe, where behavior is managed well by teachers and administrators, and where students place a premium on obeying the rules. Cronbach's alpha for this variable, which includes four items, is .704. Items in this variable include "Classrooms are well managed," "Discipline is fairly administered," and Students place a high priority on obeying the rules."

The Diverse Community, which is defined as a community that values the understanding of and constituency that includes diverse ethnic, racial, socio-economic, and denominational membership, is the second variable under School Culture. Cronbach's alpha for this variable, which includes eight items, is .775. Items for this variable include "It is important that CCP's community of students, faculty, and staff be diverse in ethnic and racial background," "It is important that CCP's community of students, faculty, and staff be diverse in religious denominations," "CCP has an appropriate gender balance among students," and "Academic programs provide opportunities to learn about diverse cultures."

The third variable included in School Culture, Physical Climate/Facilities, is defined as the overall physical appearance and cleanliness of the school's facilities. Cronbach's alpha for this variable, which includes four items, is .710. Items for this variable include "CCP's landscaping and grounds are appropriately maintained" and "CCP facilities are kept appropriately clean during school hours."

The fourth variable within School Culture, Communications, is defined as the responsiveness, efforts, and effects of the school and/or its employees to share information with the school's families. Cronbach's alpha for this variable, which includes six items, is .802. Items for this variable include "Faculty are approachable, available and easy to relate to," "The principal is responsive," and "Parents receive timely, accurate, and adequate information for their families to be prepared for the start of the school year."

The fifth variable under the umbrella of School Culture, Sense of Community, is defined as "acting intentionally, [the school] will foster a vibrant, connected culture of

caring, fellowship and respect among students, staff and parents” (CCP Core Values statement). Cronbach’s alpha for this variable, which includes eleven items, is .893. Items for this variable include “CCP is a friendly place for students and it is easy for them to make friends here,” “CCP has appropriate school spirit and pride,” and “CCP's parents have ample opportunity to volunteer at the school.”

The sixth and final variable under School Culture, Mission, is defined as the school’s adherence to and pursuit of its stated mission “Learn, Lead, and Serve” as elucidated in its ten core values. Cronbach’s alpha for this variable is .822. There were two items from the survey used to measure this variable: “CCP achieves its mission statement at my student's/my building” and “I understand how the school carries out the overall mission of CCP.”

Included in the factor titled Extra/Co-Curricular Factors are three variables with a combined Cronbach’s alpha of .735. The first variable, General Opportunities, is defined as student opportunities (other than athletics and Fine Arts) for involvement outside of the classroom. Cronbach’s alpha for this variable is .803. Two items from the survey were included in this variable: “Students have many opportunities to be highly involved” and “Students have satisfactory learning opportunities outside the classroom.”

The second variable for Extra/Co-Curricular Factors, Athletics, is defined as opportunities outside of the school day for participation in school-sanctioned leagues or clubs. It does not include co-curricular offerings in Physical Education. Cronbach’s alpha for this variable, which includes three items, is .840. Items include “Athletics have a positive impact on spiritual life” and “Coaches and Athletic Staff demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principles in interaction with students and each other.”

The third variable under Extra/Co-curricular Factors, Fine Arts, is defined as opportunities in visual and performing arts – both co-curricular offerings during the school day and opportunities offered outside of the school day. This variable included only one item – “Fine Arts have a positive impact on spiritual life.”

The sixth and final factor, Personnel, includes two variables with a combined Cronbach’s alpha of .908. The first variable, Principal, is defined as the building-level administrator where each family’s children attend and that person’s impact on interactions within the building. Cronbach’s alpha for this variable is .884. Three items were used in the survey for this variable: “The principal is respectful,” “The Principal is involved in the lives of students,” and “The principal serves as a strong spiritual role model.”

The second variable under Personnel, Teachers, is defined as the expertise and relational impact of all teachers in the CCP community. It is not limited to the particular building where parents’ children currently attend. Cronbach’s alpha for this variable, which includes six items, is .911. Items for this variable include “Faculty are involved in the lives of students,” “CHCA recruits quality staff,” and “Faculty are professional.”

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are a number of potential limitations to the study which are briefly summarized below. Inherent in all survey data are the limitations related to self-reporting and, therefore, it will most certainly be a limitation of this study as well. Self-reported data is a limitation in research because it may not reflect accurate views related to the respondent. Ensuring confidentiality, which is included in the methods of this study, is an

effective way to *minimize* such self-reporting limitations, but it cannot completely eliminate it.

CCP addressed three major disadvantages intrinsic to some web-based surveys – “limited sampling (i.e. those with computer access), lack of confidentiality and privacy, and response rate” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006, p. 239) – by ensuring confidentiality through the assignment of identification numbers instead of using respondents’ names and by having at its disposal a highly computer-literate parent population thus reducing the probability of low response rate due to limited access to technology or the lack of expertise necessary to complete the survey.

Second, because the sample population and response rate include only CCP families, the results may be “difficult to generalize to other contexts, are less representative of an identified population, are dependant on unique characteristics of the sample, and there is a greater likelihood of error due to experimenter or subject bias” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006, p. 128). In this research, the area of subject bias could be a critical limitation. Because the respondents of the survey are, in fundamental nature, volunteers, they “tend to be better educated, of higher social class, more intelligent, more sociable, more unconventional, less authoritarian, less conforming, more altruistic, and more extroverted than non-volunteers (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006, p. 127).”

A third potential limitation is the sample size, particularly as it pertains to the research question related to exit. The small N size of respondents that ultimately exited the school (N=22) is a small enough percentage of the respondents that it may lack the statistical power to confidently identify differences that exist. Although the school followed an acceptable protocol in trying to increase the response rate as described in the



Data Collection Section above, a small sample size could represent a significant limitation to the study, particularly the low number of exiters.

In terms of the survey instrument itself, the format of the CCP Marketing Survey is less than desirable as many of the items include “double-barreled questions [that] contain two or more ideas, and frequently the word *and* is used in the item” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006, p. 196). In reviewing this survey (see Appendix B), it is clear that many of the items included in the survey are, in fact, double-barreled and, as such, they can call into question the results of the survey. Consequently, this researcher excluded items for which the responses lacked face validity or their distributions called into question their reliability.

A significant design flaw in both of the surveys, and therefore a limitation of the study, is that neither provided pilot testing of the instructions or items. Since “it is critical to pilot test both the instructions and the survey before distributing them to the identified sample” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006, p. 235), this represents a potential failing in the design of the instrument.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS**

This study sought to better understand the reasons for parental choice of an independent, non-denomination Christian school and, when applicable, parents' decision to exit the school before completion of the school's program. Literature related to school choice from community-based public schools, magnet and charter schools, private/parochial/religious schools, as well as literature related to Rational Choice Theory and Hirschman's Exit, Voice, and Loyalty Theory provided the empirical and theoretical framework for the study. It is from this literature and the use of surveys directed to families enrolled in a private, non-denominational Christian school that the author sought to provide data related to the following three research questions:

7. What sources and types of information do choosers use that result in successful enrollment in a private, non-denominational Christian School?
8. What are parents' reasons for choosing a private, non-denominational Christian School?
9. What are parents' reasons for choosing to exit the school?

### **Sources and Types of Information**

CCP families were asked to complete the CCP Marketing Survey (see Appendix A) and several items from the survey were used in this research in order to provide data as it related to research question one – What sources and types of information do choosers use that result in successful enrollment in a private, non-denominational Christian School?

Item q1 of the survey asked, "How did you first hear of CCP" (see Table 4.1). Of the 393 respondents, 63.3% indicated a relational connection as their initial source of

information. Of those relational sources, word of mouth from a friend was clearly the most popular (48.6%) but other sources included neighbor, co-worker, and employee.

*Table 4.1. How did you first hear of CCP?*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Can't remember	22	5.6	5.6
Word of mouth – friend	191	48.6	54.2
Word of mouth – neighbor	35	8.9	63.1
Word of mouth – co-worker	19	4.8	67.9
Word of mouth – employee	4	1.0	69.0
Information session/Open House	14	3.6	72.5
Print Advertisement	19	4.8	77.4
Website	12	3.1	80.4
Other	77	19.6	100.0
Total	393	100.0	

Item q2 (see Appendix C) then went beyond merely identifying the sources of initial information to asking how “helpful” various sources of information are for families in deciding whether or not to enroll in a school of choice – “Please rate, if applicable, how helpful each of the following sources of information are when deciding on a school for your children.” Possible responses of Helpful, Somewhat Helpful, Unsure, and Not Helpful were included. When analyzing the data, however, the decision was made to drop the choice of “unsure” from the four possible responses because it was not ordinal and, therefore, analysis only included Helpful, Somewhat Helpful, and Not Helpful. There were nine items in q2 that respondents were asked to rate. Before thoroughly reporting the results from q2, however, the following section will reorient the reader to the sources of information conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 2 so that the data can then be couched within that framework.

### *Sources of Information as They Relate to Conceptual Framework*

Chapter 2 includes a conceptual framework for organizing sources of information into informal/relational sources, formal/media sources, and school-based sources (see Figure 2.2 on page 24 and Table 2.1 on page 25). Additional insight is generated in forthcoming sections of Chapter 4 by organizing data related to sources of information into the categories provided by the conceptual framework; especially data from q2 of the CCP Marketing Survey (see Table 4.2). It should be noted that the data related to q2 uses means for individual items and, because the items are not internally consistent, the items within each framework are not aggregated together for an overall group mean.

*Table 4.2. Ranking of Sources of Information Organized into Conceptual Framework*

	Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Unhelpful	M	SD
Informal/Relational					
CCP families	332	31	1	2.91	.297
Church members	224	83	9	2.68	.525
Formal/Media					
Websites that act as a resource for general school information	228	67	14	2.69	.552
Print advertising (newspapers, magazines)	128	145	29	2.33	.643
Radio advertising	29	72	106	1.63	.719
Print materials sent through the mail	209	127	12	2.57	.562
School-based					
Email from schools	91	91	56	2.15	.774
Phone calls from schools	105	83	78	2.10	.825
School website	293	56	5	2.81	.425

3.00=Helpful, 2.00=Somewhat Helpful, 1.00=Unhelpful

Informal/relational sources, information provided through relational connections such as extended family, neighbors, co-workers, or other families with children in the

school, is represented in item q2 of the CCP Marketing Survey by two items – “CCP Families” and “Church Members.” Formal/media sources include information received from media outlets like radio, television, the internet, and print media. These formal sources of information do go beyond mass media, however, and can include “community centers and politicians” (Schneider, et. al. 2000, p. 113). This type of information is distinguishable from the informal/relational sources discussed above as it is relatively impersonal in nature. This type of information is represented, for example, in item q2 of the CCP Marketing Survey by four items – “Websites that act as a resource for general school information,” “print advertising (magazines, newspapers),” “Radio advertising,” and “Print materials sent through the mail.”

The third source of information in this conceptual framework is school-based. This source focuses on school newsletters, web-pages, brochures, school information centers, application material, open houses/visits to schools, and interaction with persons associated with the district like staff, PTA members, teachers, and administrators. It is represented in item q2 of the CCP Marketing Survey by three items – “Email from school,” “Phone calls from school,” and “School website.”

#### *“Helpful” Sources of Information*

Two sources of information from q2 of the CCP Marketing Survey are considered by respondents to be much more helpful than the other seven in deciding on a school for their children (see Table 4.2). Using a scale where 3.00=Helpful, 2.00=Somewhat Helpful, and 1.00=Not Helpful, The first source, “CCP families,” shows ratings as “helpful” by 91.2% of the respondents, “somewhat helpful” by 8.5%, and “not helpful” by < 1% (M=2.91, SD=.297). The second source of information, “School website,” using

the same scale as mentioned above shows ratings as “helpful” by 82.7% of the respondents, “somewhat helpful” by 15.8%, and “not helpful” by only 1.5% ( $M=2.81$ ,  $SD=.425$ ). The next highest rated items in terms of helpfulness, again using the same scale mentioned above, are “websites that act as a resource for general school information” ( $M=2.69$ ,  $SD=.552$ ) and “church members” ( $M=2.68$ ,  $SD=.525$ ). Various forms of advertising are rated, by far, as the lowest in terms of their helpfulness for families when deciding on a school for their children with “print advertising (newspapers and magazines)” ( $M=2.33$ ,  $SD=.643$ ) and “radio advertising” ( $M=1.63$ ,  $SD=.719$ ) scoring below the other seven items.

Overall, then, items within the informal/relational sources of information ranked as the most helpful sources for choosers with CCP Families comprising the highest mean ( $M=2.91$ ). Formal/media sources, contrarily, ranked as the least helpful and would have been measurably lower without the relatively high mean for websites that act as a resource for general school information ( $M=2.69$ ). Radio advertising, an item within formal/media sources, had, comparatively, the lowest mean ( $M=1.63$ ) when weighed against all items in q2.

### *“Important” Sources of Information*

While q2 from the CCP Marketing Survey asks respondents for opinions regarding the *helpfulness* of information sources in deciding on a school of choice in general, q3 asks for opinions regarding the *importance* of various information sources in regards to choosing Christian College Prep, in particular (see Table 4.3). Additionally, and in contrast to q2, respondents are asked in q3 to choose the five most important sources of information when making the decision to send their child(ren) to CCP, not, as

in q2, to rate every item as “helpful,” “somewhat helpful,” or “not helpful.” Respondents are then asked as a follow up to q3 to rate their top five choices in terms of “most important,” “second,” “third,” “fourth,” and “fifth” most important. To calculate means for each response, 0 equals not in the top five reasons and 1 equals the items was among the top five.

*Table 4.3. Means and Ratings of Top Five “Most Important” Sources of Information\**

	Not in the Top Five	M for Inclusion in Top Five	SD	Most Important	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Current CCP Families	150	.60	.490	52	35	49	54	40
Achievement Test Scores	158	.58	.494	78	59	44	24	17
Teachers at CCP	202	.47	.500	43	49	45	30	11
Your child's impressions/preferences of CCP	209	.45	.498	43	45	31	28	24
Individual Tour	212	.44	.497	40	41	39	29	19
CCP website	239	.37	.483	9	14	21	36	61
Open House	242	.36	.480	16	20	18	47	37
Classroom Visit	260	.31	.464	18	24	36	26	16
Admissions office at CCP	266	.30	.460	9	17	21	23	44
Principal at CCP	286	.25	.431	7	16	24	26	21
Student Shadowing	298	.22	.413	7	15	25	19	16
Your other children's experience at CCP	300	.21	.406	39	26	7	4	4
Friends or neighbors	308	.18	.387	7	8	6	15	36
Educational-oriented websites	356	.06	.243	1	2	7	3	11
Other family members	355	.06	.243	7	6	1	2	9
School newsletter or flier	364	.04	.194	0	1	3	6	6
Newspaper or magazine add	366	.04	.188	1	2	1	3	7
Guidance counselor at CCP	365	.04	.194	1	1	3	7	3
Informational meetings at another community organization	369	.02	.152	4	1	2	2	2

\*n=382

When reviewing the data in Table 4.3, just as in q2, “CCP families” was included in the top five more than any other item (M=.60, SD=.490). This was followed closely by “Achievement test scores” (M=.58, SD=.494). However, when examining the ratings of most important and second most important, achievement test scores were rated by respondents as a more important source of information (38.9% rate the item as most



important or second most important) than CCP families (22.8% most important or second most important). This data showing that achievement test scores were a more *important* source of information was reinforced when one examined the overall mean scores (1=Most Important, 6=Not in the Top Five) of each individual item (see Table 4.4). These means are reported in descending order with lower means indicating more important sources of information. In examining this data, “Achievement Test Scores” was clearly rated as a more *important* source of information (M=3.83) than any other source with “Current CCP Families” rated second (M=4.17) and, comparatively, as a largely more important source of information than any other source.

However, other than achievement test scores, one can note in looking at the means for q3 – both in terms of including them in the top five, in general, as well as rating the items individually – that all other highly rated sources of information in terms of importance are related to choosers interacting with *people* already connected to the school in some way. In terms of being included in the top five most important sources of information, “CCP families” (M=.60 for including the item in the top five reasons, M=4.17 for individual importance within the top five with 1=most important and 6=not in the top five at all), “teachers at CCP” (M=.47, M=4.38), “individual tour” (M=.44, M=4.53), “Open House” (M=.36, M=5.09), “classroom visit” (M=.31, M=5.05), “admissions office at CCP” (M=.30, M=5.30), “Principal at CCP” (M=.25, M=5.36), “student shadowing” (M=.22, M=5.41), and “your other children’s experience at CCP” (M=.21, M=5.13) are all included and all involve a relational connection with CCP personnel, families, and/or students. Two exceptions to this rule are “your child’s

impressions/preferences of CCP” (M=.45, M=4.51) and “CCP website” (M=.37, M=5.22).

*Table 4.4. Overall Mean for Individual Items in “Top Five Most Important” Sources of Information\**

	N	M	SD
Achievement Test Scores	380	3.83	2.068
Current CCP Families	380	4.17	1.842
Teachers at CCP	380	4.38	1.917
Your child’s impressions/preferences for CCP	380	4.51	1.895
Individual Tour	380	4.53	1.868
Classroom Visit	380	5.05	1.569
Open House	380	5.09	1.447
Your other child’s experiences at CCP	380	5.13	1.767
CCP Website	380	5.22	1.270
Admissions Office at CCP	380	5.30	1.295
Principal at CCP	380	5.36	1.274
Student Shadowing	380	5.41	1.258
Friends or neighbors	380	5.60	1.018
Other family members	380	5.80	.863
Educational-oriented websites	380	5.87	.599
Information meetings at another community organization	380	5.91	.609
Guidance counselor at CCP	380	5.91	.503
School newsletter	380	5.92	.431
Newspaper or Magazine add	380	5.92	.467

\*1= Most Important, 6= Not in the top five

*“Most Important” or “Second Most Important” Means v. Rating*

The data was clear that achievement test scores and CCP Families rated significantly higher in terms of importance than any other source. This was true as a mean score in being included as one of the top five sources of information (see Table 4.3), in terms of the ratings related to the most important and second most important source (also see Table 4.3), and in terms of overall ratings of individual items from most important to not in the top five (see Table 4.4). The next tier of highly rated sources of information was not as consistently strong across all measures as the first two sources, especially and for example as related to the importance of the school’s website as is discussed immediately below.

When relying solely on means as a determinant of importance, the item “CCP website” ranked in the top third with a mean of .37 – sixth of nineteen items. However, when one uses the frequency of respondent rankings regarding “most important” and “second” most important sources of information, the CCP website fell below a number of other items – almost exclusively people-related – and into the bottom half of all items – eleventh of nineteen. For example, while 36.9% of the respondents rated the CCP website as one of the top five sources of information in terms of importance, only 6% of the respondents rated the site as the most important or second most important source.

By looking beyond the various means in terms of understanding the importance of sources and, instead, looking at those items with strong preferences as “most important” or “second most important,” the importance of other sources of information were magnified. For example, while having a much lower mean than “CCP website” – .37 compared to .21 – “Your other children’s experiences at CCP” show 16.9% of the respondents rated this item in the most important or second most important category as compared to the CCP website’s rating of 6%. The following items also showed stronger or equal ratings pertaining to most important or second most important sources of information when compared to the CCP website – despite having lower means:

Classroom visit (M=.31) 11%, Open House (M=.36) 9.4%, Admissions office at CCP (M=.30) 6.8%, and Principal at CCP (M=.25) 6%. Again, a common theme in all of these items with lower means but relatively higher or equal ratings as either most important or second most important sources of information was that they involved direct relational connection between the choosing family and current CCP personnel, staff, and/or students.

### *Other Data Related to Information Sources*

As mentioned above, “CCP families” rank consistently high as both “helpful” and “important” sources of information while “Achievement Test Scores” rank as the singularly “most important” source of information for families who are choosing. However, there are other data related to information sources and their use that are noteworthy.

*Table 4.5. Proportion of School Choice Decision Made by Parent/Guardian*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20	3	.8	.8
25	1	.3	1.1
30	5	1.3	2.4
40	3	.8	3.2
45	2	.5	3.8
49	1	.3	4.0
50	33	8.9	12.9
51	1	.3	13.2
55	1	.3	13.5
60	12	3.2	16.7
65	3	.8	17.5
66	1	.3	17.8
70	17	4.6	22.4
75	37	10.0	32.3
80	34	9.2	41.5
85	5	1.3	42.9
89	1	.3	43.1
90	44	11.9	55.0
95	16	4.3	59.3
98	2	.5	59.8
99	3	.8	60.6
100	146	39.4	100.0
Total	371	100.0	

One such data source comes from q6 of the CCP Marketing Survey – “What proportion of the decision on which school your child(ren) would attend was made by the parents/guardians of the household and what proportion of the decision depended on the

child(ren)'s preference? Please fill in the proportion of the decision that came from you and the proportion dependent on your child(ren) so that the two proportions add up to 100.” While the data from other questions on the survey showed that children were significant sources of information – 44.8% of families included “your child’s perceptions/preferences of CCP” as one of the five most important sources of information and ranked the item fourth out of eighteen total items (see Table 4.3) – the ultimate decision for choosing to enroll is that of parents/guardians.

The data included from q6 of the CCP Marketing Survey shows that 39.4% of respondents indicated that 100% of the decision to enroll was made by the parent/guardian – an indication that for these parents/guardians their children had no proportional effect in the decision to attend CCP at all. Furthermore, 67.7% of the respondents indicated that, proportionally, they had at least 75% of the decision-making power in the decision to enroll their child(ren) at CCP, and 96% of the respondents indicate that they have at least 50% of the decision-making power (see Table 4.5).

An additional data point related to parents use of information is found in q14 of the CCP Marketing Survey – How many times do you need to visit a school before making a final decision? Respondents were given the choice of one, two, three, four, or “more than four” times. Ninety-four percent (94.0%) indicated that they chose a school after three visits or less with the vast majority (72.6%) indicating the need for only two visits or less (see Table 4.6). The role, therefore, of the first impressions a school can make upon choosers cannot be overlooked in the choice process.

*Table 4.6. Number of Times a Parent Needs to Visit before Choosing a School*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not necessary	2	.5	.5
1	72	19.7	20.3
2	191	52.3	72.6
3	78	21.4	94.0
4	14	3.8	97.8
More than 4	8	2.2	100.0
Total	365	100.0	

### **Reasons for Choice**

#### *Rating Reasons for Choice of CCP by Individual Item*

Individual items assessing reasons for family choice of CCP are rated in descending means with 1= Not Important at All to 5=Very Important. Teacher to Student Ratio had the highest mean (M=4.69, SD=.567) rating only one-hundredth higher than Average Class Size (M=4.68, SD=.580). Faculty who Model Strong Christian Faith and Character Traits ranked third (M=4.66, SD=.657) followed closely by Spiritual Development (M=4.64, SD=.800). Interestingly, each of the first four individual items speaks to the community and cultural aspects of the school, and each of these items had a mean greater than or equal to 4.64 and, thus, could be described as a “very important” reason for choice.

Table 4.7. Reasons for Choice Organized by Factor

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important at All	M	SD
<i>College Preparation (M=4.02, SD=.760)</i>							
College acceptance	222	85	25	7	5	4.49	.833
SAT score performance	147	122	49	9	5	4.20	.894
Number of advanced placement courses	112	137	62	16	4	4.02	.911
Advanced placement exam performances	105	122	80	17	6	3.92	.963
CCP Elementary school Stanford achievement scores	95	117	78	18	16	3.79	1.078
Average CCP Middle School Stanford achievement scores	89	129	75	20	14	3.79	1.045
<i>Christian Environment (M=4.38, SD=.589)</i>							
Faculty who model strong Christian faith and character traits	259	63	21	1	2	4.66	.657
Spiritual development	237	80	18	1	1	4.64	.800
High degree of parent involvement	144	150	41	9	2	4.23	.627
Biblical integration in all subjects	183	85	53	21	4	4.22	.992
Weekly chapel with high student involvement	128	137	61	16	2	4.08	.885
<i>Student-teacher ratio (M=4.69, SD=.546)</i>							
Teacher to student ratio	248	76	12	0	1	4.69	.567
Average class size	247	75	14	0	1	4.68	.580
<i>Extra-curriculars (M=3.74, SD=.690)</i>							
Service opportunities	132	157	49	5	1	4.20	.755
Percent of students participating in extra-curricular opportunities	77	147	79	27	3	3.80	1.193
High school two-week winter term allowing for missions, service, and experiential learning	47	98	82	69	30	3.19	.916
<i>Advanced teacher preparation (M=3.48, SD=.860)</i>							
Percent of High School faculty with advanced degrees	78	153	74	23	3	3.85	.890
Percent of faculty with doctorates	24	99	119	72	19	3.11	1.010

5.00=Very Important, 4.00=Important, 3.00=Somewhat Important, 2.00=Not Very Important, 1.00=Not Important at All

Comparatively, there was a slight drop to the next tier of reasons for choice with College Acceptances ranked fifth ( $M=4.49$ ,  $SD=.833$ ), followed by High Degree of Parent Involvement ( $M=4.23$ ,  $SD=.627$ ), Biblical Integration in All Subject Areas ( $M=4.22$ ,  $SD=.992$ ), Percent of Students Participating in Extra-Curricular Opportunities ( $M=4.20$ ,  $SD=.755$ ), SAT score performance ( $M=4.20$ ,  $SD=.894$ ), Weekly Chapel with High Student Involvement ( $M=4.08$ ,  $SD=.885$ ) and, The Number of Advanced Placement Courses ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=.911$ ). It should be noted that each of these items in the second tier had a mean equal to or greater than 4.02 and, thus could be described as an “important” reason for choice. In addition, while this tier includes three items related to academic performance, it also includes four items related more closely to community and cultural aspects of the school.

While a third tier of individual items related to reasons for choice showed means ranging from 3.92 for Advanced Placement Exam Performances ( $SD=.963$ ) to 3.79 for Average CCP Middle School Stanford Achievement Scores ( $SD=1.045$ ) and CCP Elementary School Stanford Achievement Scores ( $SD=1.078$ ), only two items created a fourth tier and had means that situated them closer to “somewhat helpful” than “helpful” – High School Two-Week Winter Term Allowing for Missions, Service, and Experiential Learning ( $m=3.19$ ,  $SD=.916$ ) and Percent of Faculty with Doctorates ( $M=3.11$ ,  $SD=1.010$ ). Of note, while all other items related to community or cultural aspects of the school showed means equal to or greater than 4.08, High School Two-Week Winter Term – an item clearly related to the cultural ethos of the school – ranked second from the bottom in the overall list of individual items.



### *Reasons for Choice of CCP Rated by Factor*

Based on the ratings of individual items, it should come as no surprise that the highest rated factors related to familial choice of CCP are related to community and cultural aspects of the school. The top-rated factor was Teacher-to-Student Ratio ( $M=4.69$ ,  $SD=.546$ ) followed by Christ-Centered Environment ( $M=4.38$ ,  $SD=.589$ ). The third highest in terms of mean was College Preparation ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=.760$ ). Each of these three factors showed means greater than 4.0, indicating that all were considered “important” by choosers. However, only Teacher-to-Student Ratio showed a mean greater than 4.5, indicating that choosers rated this closer to “very important” in their reasons for choice of CCP.

Following behind in terms of importance, comparatively speaking, were Extra-Curriculars ( $M=3.74$ ,  $SD=.690$ ) and Advanced teacher preparation ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=.860$ ), both with means less than 4.0. It should be noted that in the case of Extra-Curriculars the relatively high individual rating of Service Opportunities bolstered this factor’s overall mean, highlighting the importance of service to families that chose CCP while, also, accentuating the lesser importance of other extra-curricular opportunities by families that chose CCP when compared to other factors.

### *Reasons for Choice of CCP, In Particular*

While questions q21 and q25 that are discussed above asked families to rate each individual item and corresponding factors based on their importance in the choice process, the CCP Marketing Survey took a different tact in question q26 as it utilized a forced-choice format. Question q26 asked respondents to select “up to three” items from a list of twenty-eight possible “explanations” in order to identify those that “best explain

why your child(ren) attend(s) CCP.” Means were calculated from zero (0) equals not among the top three explanations for choosing CCP and one (1) equals in the top three explanations.

Of the twenty-eight individual items in this question, when forced to identify the top three explanations, two of the items, Christ-centered Environment and The School’s Strong Academic Reputation, were clearly included at a higher rate than the others (see Table 4.8). Christ-Centered Environment had a mean of .64 (SD=.482) while The School’s Strong Academic Reputation had a mean of .53 (SD=.500). In other words, 64% of the respondents rated Christ-centered environment as one of the top three reasons for choosing the school, and 53% rated the school’s strong academic reputation as one of the top three reasons for choice, as well. The third highest rated item, CCP’s Vision, Mission, and Values, showed a much lower mean of .35 (SD=.477) and was followed by Cost (M=.28, SD=.452) and Smaller Class Sizes (M=.26, SD=.441). It is important to note, and bears mentioning here, that the item “Cost” and “Technology” are from q16 of the CCP Marketing Survey. Q16 asks respondents to list the top *five* reasons for choosing a school – not the top three as in q21 and q25 – but the topic of cost and technology are of such importance that they are included with the data generated from q21 and q25. Listed among the items with the lowest rated means are J-Term (M=.02, SD=.152), I Have another Child in the Same School (M=.01, SD=.108), The Racial/Ethnic Mix at the School (M=.01, SD=.077), The School is Safe (M=.01, SD=.077), and Discipline (M=.00, SD=.054).

*Table 4.8. Means of Top Three Reasons that Best Explain Familial Choice of Nondenominational, College Preparatory Christian School*

	N	M	SD
The Christ-centered environment	338	.64	.482
The school's strong academic recommendation	338	.53	.500
CCP's mission, vision, and values	338	.35	.477
Cost*	362	.28	.452
Smaller class sizes	338	.26	.441
The school teaches values the traditional public schools do not	338	.20	.397
Biblical integration in all content subjects	338	.14	.353
Good teachers	338	.09	.285
Location close to home, job, or child care	338	.07	.257
Technology (used in class/curriculum)*	362	.07	.249
High test scores of students attending CCP	338	.06	.236
My child wanted to attend the school	338	.06	.231
I was unhappy with the instruction at previous school	338	.05	.213
This school has good physical facilities	338	.05	.213
The athletics program	338	.04	.200
The fine arts program	338	.04	.193
Opportunities for parental involvement	338	.03	.161
Extra-curricular programming	338	.03	.161
J-Term	338	.02	.152
The teaching style of the school	338	.02	.152
I was unhappy with the curriculum at previous school	338	.02	.132
I have another child at the same school	338	.01	.108
My child was performing poorly at previous school	338	.01	.094
My child's friends attend the school	338	.01	.094
The racial/ethnic mix at the school	338	.01	.077
The principal	338	.01	.077
The school is safe	338	.01	.077
Discipline	338	.00	.054
Before and/or after school childcare	338	.00	.054
Recommendation of teacher or official at my child's previous school	338	.00	.000

\* These items are from q16 of the CCP Marketing Survey that asked for the top five items related to reasons for choice.

One particular item mentioned immediately above but bearing additional analysis is Cost. Always an item that is an integral part of school choice debate, cost ranks in this research as a distant fourth in terms of mean score ( $M=.28$ ) in comparison to other reasons for choice. Another perspective on this data point is to recognize that 71.5% of the families that chose CCP do not rank cost as even one of the top five considerations in their choice (See Table 4.9).

*Table 4.9. Cost as Related to Top Five Reasons for Choice of School*

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Not in the top five school selection factors	259	71.5
Cost	103	28.5
Total	362	100.0

When combined with demographic data regarding the average income of CCP families (See Table 4.10) that reports 73% have an annual household income over \$100,000 and 42% have an annual household income over \$200,000, it illustrates that because of familial wealth, cost is not a crucial issue for a large percentage of families successfully enrolled at the school.

*Table 4.10. Annual Household Income of CCP Families*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Under \$25,000	1	.3	.4	.4
\$25,000-\$49,999	18	6.2	6.9	7.3
\$50,000-\$74,999	25	8.6	9.6	16.9
\$75,000-\$99,999	26	8.9	10.0	26.8
\$100,000-\$149,999	35	12.0	13.4	40.2
\$150,000-\$199,999	46	15.8	17.6	57.9
\$200,000 or higher	110	37.7	42.1	100.0

## **Reasons for Exit**

### *Factors Influencing Exit*

As Chapter 3 details, data gathered from CCP's Constituents' Survey are divided into two groups, families that reenrolled in CCP after the 2007-2008 school year and families that exited the school during or after the 2007-2008 school year, in order to determine what, if any, statistically significant variables differ between families that exit and those that do not. The  $\alpha$  for statistical significance was set at .05, and while an

argument for the  $\alpha$  being set at .10 could be made because of the small N size of exiters (N=22), the more conservative .05 was used. It was the hope that these comparisons would shed light on “What are parents’ reasons for choosing to exit the school?” Data were grouped into six factors: Academic Factors, Spiritual Factors, Financial Factors, School Culture, Extra/Co-Curricular Factors, and Personnel. These factors were derived by organizing individual items from the CCP Constituents’ Survey into variables (see Appendix C). To remind the reader of the subscales included in each factor, within Academic Factors were the subscales Rigor and Excellence and Biblical Integration. Within Spiritual Factors were four subscales – Christ-centeredness, Spiritual Growth, Service/Outreach, and Christian Studies. Within Financial Factors were Tuition, Relative Value to Other Schools, and Fiscal Stewardship. Within School Culture were six subscales – Discipline/Safety, Diverse Community, Physical Climate/Facilities, Communications, Sense of Community, and Mission. Within Extra/Co-Curricular Factors were General Opportunities, Athletics, and Fine Arts. Within the sixth and final factor Personnel were Principal and Teachers. Ratings for determining means were based on a seven-point Likert scale with 1=Strongly Agree, 4=Neither Agree nor Disagree, and 7=Strongly Disagree.

As shown in Table 4.11, no significant differences were found between exiters and reenrollees on any factors when using .05 as the level for statistical significance. A primary reason for the lack of statistical significance is the low statistical power generated by the small N size (N=22) in the exiter population.

*Table 4.11. Reasons For Exit (Organized by Factor)*

Factors	Exited (n=22)		Re-enrolled (n=269)		T-Test Level of Significance**
	M*	SD	M*	SD	
Academic Factors	2.54	.704	2.29	.721	.168
Rigor and Excellence	1.99	.812	1.91	.811	.688
Biblical Integration	3.05	1.036	2.64	.919	.079
Spiritual Factors	2.01	.723	1.97	.685	.835
Christ Centeredness	2.19	.821	2.01	.701	.279
Spiritual Growth	2.01	.845	2.06	.898	.791
Service and Outreach	1.90	.724	1.87	.788	.839
Christian Studies	1.79	.687	1.91	.995	.600
Financial Factors	2.60	.717	2.27	.873	.124
Tuition	2.81	1.436	2.74	1.429	.834
Relative Value to Other Schools	2.79	.936	2.06	1.121	.010***
Fiscal Stewardship	2.33	.789	2.39	.997	.806
School Culture	2.18	.554	2.09	.584	.510
Discipline/Safety	2.44	1.184	2.24	.952	.379
Diverse Community	2.71	.521	2.49	.759	.207
Physical Climate/Facilities	1.71	.577	1.73	.744	.924
Communication	1.93	.866	1.80	.728	.458
Sense of Community	2.18	.880	2.08	.733	.542
Mission	2.48	1.156	2.21	1.034	.263
Extra/Co-Curricular Factors	2.44	.823	2.52	.909	.713
General Opportunities	2.21	.888	2.09	.995	.594
Athletics	2.61	1.193	2.85	1.441	.483
Fine Arts	2.52	1.078	2.35	1.235	.534
Personnel	2.03	.682	1.86	.823	.378
Principal	1.78	.614	1.65	.883	.511
Teachers	2.15	.888	1.98	.904	.405

\*1.00 = Strongly Agree, 2.00 = Agree, 3.00 = Somewhat Agree, 4.00 = Neither Agree or Disagree, 5.00 = Somewhat Disagree, 6.00 = Disagree, 7.00 = Strongly Disagree

\*\*For each T-Test, Levine's test of homogeneity of variance indicated equal variances can be assumed

\*\*\*Level of Significance at  $\leq .05$

The first factor, Academic Factors ( $\alpha=.845$ ), has a mean for exiters of 2.54 (SD=.704) and a mean for reenrolling families of 2.29 (SD=.721). The level of significance ( $p=.168$ ) indicates that there was no significant difference between exiters' and reenrollee's mean ratings of Academic Factors. No significant differences were found between exiters' and reenrollee's mean ratings of the subscales under Academic Factors – Rigor and Excellence and Biblical Integration. However, Biblical Integration should be considered marginally significant ( $p=.079$ ) because of the small N size of the exiting population and, when one considers that by eliminating a single item from this subscale –Fine Arts, the subscale would be statistically significant.

The second factor, Spiritual Factors ( $\alpha=.917$ ), has a mean for exiters of 2.01 (SD=.723) and a mean for reenrolling families of 1.97 (SD=.685). There is a small mean difference of .035. The p-value of .835 from the independent sample t-test reveals no significant difference between exiters' and reenrollee's ratings of spiritual factors. On average, both groups "Agree" that indicators of Spiritual Factors exist at CCP. T-tests on all subscales within Spiritual Factors – Christ-Centeredness, Spiritual Growth, Service/Outreach, and Christian Studies – were also non-significant.

The third factor, Financial Factors ( $\alpha=.801$ ), has a mean for exiters of 2.60 (SD=.717) and a mean for reenrolling families of 2.27 (SD=.873). There is a small mean difference of .337 between exiters and reenrollees, but this difference is not statistically significant ( $p=.124$ ). No significant differences were found between exiters' and non-reenrolling families' ratings of Tuition ( $p=.834$ ) or Fiscal Stewardship ( $p=.806$ ); however, significant differences were found on the other subscale within Financial Factors – Relative Value to Other Schools – ( $p=.010$ ).

The fourth factor, School Culture ( $\alpha=.924$ ), has a mean for exiters of 2.18 (SD=.554) and a mean for reenrolling families of 2.09 (SD=.584). There is a small mean difference of .097 between the two groups. However, this difference is not statistically significant ( $p=.510$ ). No significant differences were found between exiters' and reenrollee's mean ratings of the six subscales under School Culture – Discipline/Safety, Diverse Community, Physical Climate/Facilities, Communication, Sense of Community, and Mission.

The fifth factor, Extra/Co-curricular ( $\alpha=.735$ ), has a mean for exiters of 2.44 (SD=.823) and a mean for reenrolling families of 2.52 (SD=.909). The mean difference is -.080, which is not statistically significant ( $p=.713$ ). This factor is the only one of the six factors with a negative mean difference, which indicates more favorable ratings by exiters relative to reenrolling families. However, this difference is not significantly different and is primarily the result of the mean scores for the Athletics subscale (exiters  $M=2.62$ , reenrollers  $M=2.85$ ). It should be noted that each question related to the subscale of Athletics focuses on the the role spiritual and Biblical integration plays in Athletics – “Biblical truth and athletics,” “Athletics have a positive role in spiritual life,” and “Coaches and athletic staff demonstrate godly behavior based on biblical principles in interaction with students and each other.” T-tests on the three subscales forming the Extra/Co-Curricular Factor – general opportunities, Athletics, and Fine Arts – were all non-significant.

The sixth and final factor, Personnel ( $\alpha=.908$ ), has a mean for exiters of 2.03 (SD=.682) and a mean for reenrolling families of 1.86 (SD=.823). There is a small mean difference of .167 between exiters and reenrolling families, which is not statistically



significant ( $p=.378$ ). As with all other subscales, except Relative Value to Other Schools, no statistically significant mean differences were found between exiter's and reenroller's ratings of the subscales forming Personnel – Principal ( $p=.511$ ) and Teachers ( $p=.405$ ).

#### *Exit Data on Relative Value in Comparison to other School Types*

While the data does not meet a level of statistical significance that allows one to differentiate ratings of factors by exiters, there is one subscale and one individual item within two factors that show meaningful differences between exiters and reenrollees – particularly the subscale and individual item related to CCP's relative value when compared to other school types (a subset of Financial Factors) and the subscale and individual item related to Biblical Integration (a subset of Academic Excellence).

When examining the subscale Relative Value to Other Schools the mean for exiters is 2.79 ( $SD=.936$ ) as compared to a mean for reenrolled families of 2.06 ( $SD=1.121$ ). As noted earlier, the t-test for this subscale is shown to be statistically significant ( $p=.010$ ). Cross-tabulations for the individual items within the subscale Relative Value to Other Schools yielded data consistent with this overall difference. For example, the individual item "CCP compares well in value to Catholic Christian schools" shows that 38.4% of families that reenrolled "strongly agreed" while only 10.5% of exiters selected the same option (see Table 4.12). Similarly, 31.6% of exiters indicate that they only "somewhat agreed" with the statement (compared with only 12.8% of reenrollees), and 15.8% indicate they either somewhat disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed (compared with only 8.1% of reenrollees).

*Table 4.12. Comparison in Value between CCP and Catholic Christian Schools*

		Exit		Total
		No	Yes	
Strongly Agree	Count	84	2	86
	% within Exit	38.4%	10.5%	36.1%
Agree	Count	73	7	80
	% within Exit	33.3%	36.8%	33.6%
Somewhat Agree	Count	28	6	34
	% within Exit	12.8%	31.6%	14.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	Count	16	1	17
	% within Exit	7.3%	5.3%	7.1%
Somewhat Disagree	Count	6	1	7
	% within Exit	2.7%	5.3%	2.9%
Disagree	Count	6	2	8
	% within Exit	2.7%	10.5%	2.9%
Strongly Disagree	Count	6	0	6
	% within Exit	2.7%	.0%	2.5%
Total		219	19	238
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The items “CCP compares well in value to nondenominational Christian schools,” “CCP compares well in value to private non-Christian schools,” and “CCP compares well in value to public schools” indicate similar delineations. Families that reenrolled “strongly agreed” at a rate of 39.9% when asked whether CCP’s value compares well to other non-denominational Christian schools (see Table 4.13). Only 10.5% of exiters “strongly agreed.” In addition, 47.4% of exiters respond “somewhat agree” or “neither agree nor disagree” when asked about this comparison between school types. Contrastingly, only 21.5% of reenrollees respond similarly by selecting these less favorable items.

*Table 4.13. CCP Comparison in Value between CCP and Other Non-Denominational Christian Schools*

		Exit		Total
		No	Yes	
Strongly Agree	Count	87	2	89
	% within Exit	39.9%	10.5%	37.6%
Agree	Count	78	7	85
	% within Exit	35.8%	36.8%	35.9%
Somewhat Agree	Count	28	5	33
	% within Exit	12.8%	26.3%	13.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	Count	19	4	23
	% within Exit	8.7%	21.1%	9.7%
Somewhat Disagree	Count	2	0	2
	% within Exit	.9%	.0%	.8%
Disagree	Count	2	1	3
	% within Exit	.9%	5.3%	1.3%
Strongly Disagree	Count	2	0	2
	% within Exit	.9%	.0%	.8%
Total		218	19	237
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A similarly large gap between reenrolled families and exiters exists for the item “CCP compares well in value to private non-Christian schools” – with both groups showing decreased responses in the “strongly agree” category (see Table 4.14). Families that reenrolled “strongly agreed” at a rate of 35% while exiters “strongly agreed” at only 5.6%. Exiters, meanwhile, “neither agreed nor disagreed” or “somewhat disagreed” at 44.4% compared to only 10.9% for reenrollees. For this item, both reenrolling families and exiters indicate that CCP compares less favorably to private non-Christian schools than to any other school type.

*Table 4.14. Comparison in Value between CCP and Private Non-Christian Schools*

		Exit		Total
		No	Yes	
Strongly Agree	Count	77	1	78
	% within Exit	35.0%	5.6%	32.8%
Agree	Count	79	5	84
	% within Exit	35.9%	27.8%	35.3%
Somewhat Agree	Count	35	4	39
	% within Exit	15.9%	22.2%	16.4%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	Count	21	6	27
	% within Exit	9.5%	33.3%	11.3%
Somewhat Disagree	Count	3	2	5
	% within Exit	1.4%	11.1%	2.1%
Disagree	Count	4	0	4
	% within Exit	1.8%	.0%	1.7%
Strongly Disagree	Count	1	0	1
	% within Exit	.5%	.0%	.4%
Total		220	18	238
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Finally, when asked if CCP compares well in value to public schools, reenrolling families “strongly agreed” 47.7% of the time compared to 30% of exiters. In addition, 25% of exiters “somewhat agreed” or “neither agreed nor disagreed” as compared to 15.6% of reenrollers (see Table 4.15). Therefore, in each individual item related to the variable “CCP compares well in value when compared to other school types” exiting families, at a significant level, rate CCP much less favorably than do reenrolling families.

*Table 4.15. Comparison in Value between CCP and Public Schools*

		Exit		Total
		No	Yes	
Strongly Agree	Count	116	6	122
	% within Exit	47.7%	30.0%	46.4%
Agree	Count	67	6	73
	% within Exit	27.6%	30.0%	27.8%
Somewhat Agree	Count	21	3	24
	% within Exit	8.6%	15.0%	9.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	Count	17	2	19
	% within Exit	7.0%	10.0%	7.2%
Somewhat Disagree	Count	8	1	9
	% within Exit	3.3%	5.0%	3.4%
Disagree	Count	9	2	11
	% within Exit	3.7%	10.0%	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	Count	5	0	5
	% within Exit	2.1%	.0%	1.9%
Total		243	20	263
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Exit Data on Biblical Integration Variables*

The data for exiters shows a similar pattern in the Biblical Integration variable and its associated individual items as it does for the individual items linked to the Relative Value when Compared to Other School Types variable. When examining the overall Biblical Integration subscale, the mean for exiters is 3.05 (SD=1.04) as compared to a mean for reenrolled families of 2.64 (SD=.92) (see Table 4.16). As noted earlier, this mean is not statistically significant at the .05 level. Because this result is most likely due to the small N size for exiters (N=18), these results are on the margin of significance (p=.079) and would likely become significant with more statistical power.

*Table 4.16. Comparative Means Regarding Exit as Related to Biblical Integration*

Exit	N	M	SD	Std. Mean Error
No	185	2.64	.919	.068
Yes	18	3.05	1.036	.244

When looking at the cross-tabulations for individual items within the subscale, consistent data contrasting exiter's dissatisfaction and reenrollee's agreement are identifiable. For example, the individual item "CCP has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and Language Arts" shows that 40% of exiters indicate they "neither agreed nor disagreed," "somewhat disagreed," or "disagreed" as compared with only 18.9% of reenrollees (see Table 4.17).

*Table 4.17. CCP helps students see the connection between Biblical truth and Language Arts/English*

		Exit		Total
		No	Yes	
Strongly Agree	Count	51	2	53
	% within Exit	20.0%	10.0%	19.3%
Agree	Count	108	7	115
	% within Exit	42.4%	35.0%	41.8%
Somewhat Agree	Count	48	3	51
	% within Exit	18.8%	15.0%	18.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	Count	40	6	46
	% within Exit	15.7%	30.0%	16.7%
Somewhat Disagree	Count	2	1	3
	% within Exit	.8%	5.0%	2.5%
Disagree	Count	6	1	7
	% within Exit	2.4%	5.0%	2.5%
Strongly Disagree	Count	0	0	0
	% within Exit	.0%	.0%	.0%
Total		255	20	275
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Another example is found in the item "CCP has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and Math" (see Table 4.18). Not only do exiters and

reenrollees report differences in terms of their levels of neutrality and disagreement (exiters=41.9%, reenrolling families=26%), they also contrast in their levels of agreement with the item. Reenrollees who respond “Strongly Agree” exceed exiters who indicate “Strongly Agree” by a rate of almost 3 to 1 (reenrollees=13%, exiters=4.8%).

*Table 4.18. CCP Helps Students See the Connection between Biblical Truth and Math*

		Exit		Total
		No	Yes	
Strongly Agree	Count	31	1	32
	% within Exit	13.0%	4.8%	12.3%
Agree	Count	96	7	103
	% within Exit	40.2%	33.3%	39.6%
Somewhat Agree	Count	50	4	54
	% within Exit	20.9%	19.0%	20.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	Count	52	7	59
	% within Exit	21.8%	33.3%	22.7%
Somewhat Disagree	Count	4	1	5
	% within Exit	1.7%	4.8%	1.9%
Disagree	Count	6	1	7
	% within Exit	2.5%	4.8%	2.7%
Strongly Disagree	Count	0	0	0
	% within Exit	.0%	.0%	.0%
Total		239	21	260
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Similar response patterns to those highlighted above are clear in all of the individual items that relate to core content areas within this variable – Biblical truth and Science, Biblical truth and Social Science, and Biblical truth and Foreign Language. In each case, exiters, when compared to reenrollees, respond with measurably less agreement to the statement, “CCP has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and [the subject area]” while, at the same time, registering greater neutrality or disagreement to the same statement. This trend, however, is not repeated in the extra-curricular area of Fine Arts. Instead, there is a relative equality in responses between exiters and reenrollees (see Table 4.19). When measuring responses of “Strongly agree,”

“Agree,” and “Somewhat Agree,” reenrollees show 83.4% support for the statement that CCP helps students see the connection between Biblical truth and Fine Arts. Similarly, exiters show 76% support for the statement. Only 4.4% of reenrollees disagree or strongly disagree with the statement and exiters, similarly, show 5.0% in disagreeing with the statement. Consequently, this item accounts for the marginally significant differences between the mean ratings of exiters and reenrollees on this subscale as a whole.

*Table 4.19. CCP Helps Students See the Connection between Biblical Truth and Fine Arts*

		Exit		Total
		No	Yes	
Strongly Agree	Count	42	2	44
	% within Exit	17.1%	10.0%	16.5%
Agree	Count	124	9	133
	% within Exit	50.4%	46.0%	50.0%
Somewhat Agree	Count	39	4	43
	% within Exit	15.9%	20.0%	16.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	Count	30	4	34
	% within Exit	12.2%	20.0%	12.8%
Somewhat Disagree	Count		0	4
	% within Exit	4		
Disagree	Count	5	1	6
	% within Exit	2.0%	5.0%	2.3%
Strongly Disagree	Count	2	0	2
	% within Exit	.8%	.0%	.8%
Total	Count	239	21	260
	% within Exit	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Summary of Results

In summary, there are a number of major findings in the results presented in Chapter 4. The most obvious of these related to sources and types of information is the powerful role that word-of-mouth plays as a source of both helpful and important information in steering prospective families to inquire about CCP. In conjunction with this, other relational connections provided by the school for choosers through the admissions office, open houses, student shadow days, and the like, show the important



overall factor that relationships – whether informal or school-based play in choosing a nondenominational Christian school. Two other school-based sources of information, achievement test scores and the CCP website, are also shown to be important sources of information for choosing families with families reporting that test scores are, overall, *the* most important source of information in the choice process. Formal/media sources of information clearly rated as the lowest in terms of both importance and helpfulness to choosing families with print and radio advertising rated as the lowest sources.

Two individual items clearly rate more highly than all others when families are asked to give reasons for their choice of CCP. The first of these is the school's Christ-centered environment with the second being the school's strong academic reputation. These two items are so strongly supported that it would appear in order for the school to continue to attract families both must remain strong – distinguishing one as more important than the other is implausible. Interestingly, however, when rating by factor their reasons for choice, families report that Student-Teacher ratio is clearly the most significant factor – rating higher than Academic Excellence and Christ-centeredness – as both items within the factor, Teacher-to-Student Ratio and Class Size show higher means than all other items.

Finally, there is only one statistically significant and one marginally significant difference in subscales between exiters and reenrollees. The statistically significant subscale, Relative Value in Comparison to Other School Types, indicates that in all four cases – comparisons to Catholic Christian Schools, other nondenominational Christian schools, other private schools, and public schools – exiting families considered CCP to have less value in comparison to other schools than families that reenrolled. The

marginally significant subscale, Biblical integration, shows a similar pattern. When looking at the cross-tabulations for individual items within the subscale, consistent data contrasting exiter's dissatisfaction and reenrollee's agreement are identifiable. Because the marginally significant result is most likely due to the small N size for exiters, they would be expected to become significant with the addition of more statistical power.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION**

In order to reorient the reader, this chapter begins with an overview of the purpose of the study, including the specific research questions. This is followed by a brief introduction to, and adaptation of, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation as applied to the school choice process in order to synthesize many of the findings across all three research questions. Finally, conclusions related to the sources and types of information and the implications for policy, practice, and further study are developed.

This study seeks to better understand the reasons for parental choice of an independent, non-denomination Christian school and, when applicable, parents' decision to exit the school before completion of the school's program. Literature related to school choice from community-based public schools, magnet and charter schools, private/parochial/religious schools, and homeschooling, as well as literature related to Rational Choice Theory and Hirschman's Exit, Voice, and Loyalty Theory will provide the empirical and theoretical framework for the study. It is from this literature and the use of surveys directed to families enrolled in a private, non-denominational Christian school that the author will seek to provide data related to the following three research questions:

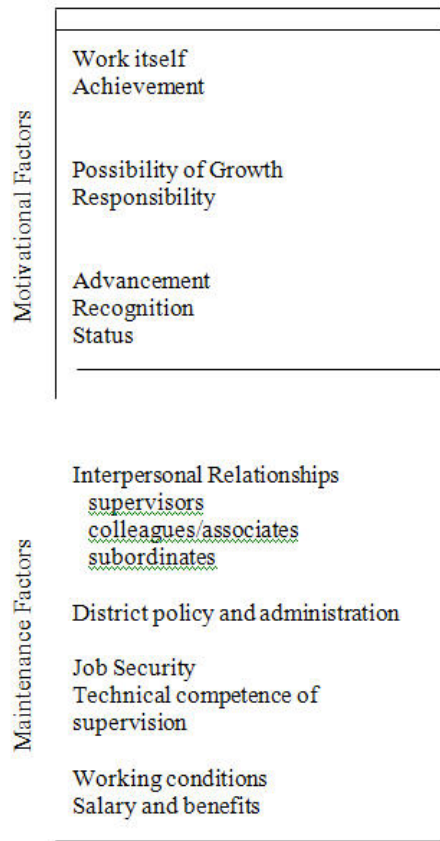
10. What sources and types of information do choosers use that result in successful enrollment in a private, non-denominational Christian School?
11. What are parents' reasons for choosing a private, non-denominational Christian School?
12. What are parents' reasons for choosing to exit the school?

## **An Adaptation of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation**

### *A Brief Introduction to Herzberg*

In reporting the conclusions for both important and helpful sources of information, as well as families' reasons for choosing a nondenominational, college preparatory Christian school, it is essential to first provide a theoretical framework that will assist in illuminating the more salient points that follow. Borrowing from Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation, a theory devoted to organizational leadership and motivation, a similar framework can be built to couch the findings regarding the school choice process in this research. Herzberg "is among those scholars who tend to think that satisfaction at work arises from the work itself or, more precisely, that job satisfaction comes from achievement" (Owens, 2004, p. 117). Consequently, Herzberg focused his work on what constituted people's "best and worst work experiences" (Bolman and Deal, 2003, p. 147) to discern if their satisfaction did, indeed, come from achievement as opposed to other factors. According to Herzberg, the experiences that workers consider their best did, in fact, involve themes of "achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and learning" (Bolman and Deal, 2003, p. 147). These experiences Herzberg coined "motivating factors" (Owens, 2004, p. 115). The experiences that workers considered their worst "centered around company policy and administration, supervision, and working conditions" (Bolman and Deal, 2003, p. 147). Herzberg called these experiences *hygiene factors* – also known in the literature as "maintenance factors" (Owens, 2004, p. 115). In Herzberg's view, "Attempts to motivate workers with better pay and fringe benefits, improved working conditions, communications programs, or human relations training missed the point. . . [Instead, Herzberg] saw job enrichment as central to motivation . . . giving workers more freedom and authority, more feedback, and

greater challenges” (Bolman and Deal, 2003, p. 148). Herzberg’s two-factor theory, therefore, includes a hierarchical framework where foundational conditions need to be met before higher needs can be realized (see Figure 5.1). For Herzberg this meant that the lower level factors – maintenance factors – related to “the work context” (Bolman and Deal, 2003, p. 148) needed to be adequately addressed so employee motivation would not be undermined. It is important to note that these maintenance factors did not provide motivation for the worker; they merely served to keep the worker from feeling disenfranchised by the organization. The theory continues in conceiving that management’s willingness to provide a work environment where the higher level factors – motivating factors - are emphasized allows employees to become “more accountable and let them use their skill” (Bolman and Deal, 2003, p. 148). These second, higher order factors are, according to Herzberg, what provides motivation for employees to function at higher and more efficient levels. In other words, assumptions related to the work of Herzberg center on the idea that “although maintenance factors are not – in themselves – motivating (or do not lead to job satisfaction), they are prerequisite to motivation” (Owens, 2004, p. 115).

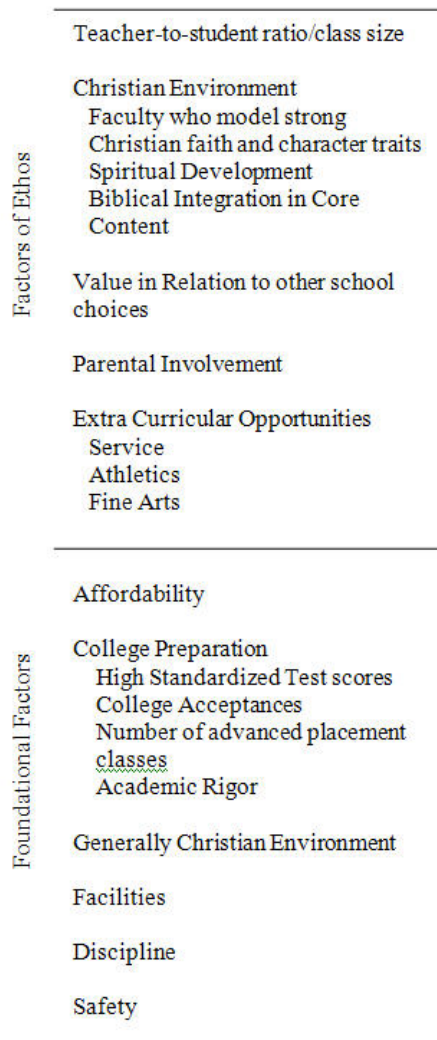


*Figure 5.1. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation. Adapted from Owens (2004, p. 199)*

#### *Foundational Factors and Factors of Ethos in Independent College-Prep School Choice*

The adaptation of Herzberg's theory to the school choice process involving nondenominational, college preparatory Christian education includes two-factors as well – what the author will call Foundational Factors and Factors of Ethos (see Figure 5.2). Foundational Factors are those factors that families either assume are in place if they are to consider the school – such as safety and discipline – or are necessary for further investigation of the school as one worthy of choosing – such as college preparatory academic rigor and affordability. They are called “foundational” as they provide for

choosers a foundation in school choice, a confidence that a solid faith-based and academic program is in place.



*Figure 5.2. Two-Factor Theory of Non-denominational, Christian, College Preparatory School Choice*

Satisfied with the Foundational Factors, families then determine whether the ethos – the philosophy and culture of the school – aligns in such a way that motivates them to choose the school. These Factors of Ethos “break the tie,” if you will, with other schools

the family may be considering, and thus, motivate choosers to enroll in the school. These factors, as shown in Figure 5.2, are centered on issues of character and modeling of faculty members, class size and teacher-to-student ratio, service opportunities, and the spiritual development of students. While foundational factors can, and are, in place in a myriad of schools, the factors of ethos are what determine the right “fit” for a family as they choose one school over another. They are often harder to define than foundational factors. For example, what is the appropriate definition for “spiritual development?” However, these variables are, ultimately, what makes the school “choosable.”

In other words, just as in Herzberg’s theory where “maintenance factors are not – in themselves – motivating . . . , they are prerequisite to motivation” (Owens, 2004, p. 115), the adaptation of this theory to school choice processes posits that foundational factors are not – in themselves – reasons that motivate choice, they are prerequisite to motivation for families to focus on a school’s ethos in choosing one school over another. Without foundational factors, families will refuse to consider a school in their choice process regardless of the school’s factors of ethos. Once these foundational factors are in place, however, families use the factors of ethos to finalize their choice.

This two-factor theory of school choice is an important framework in drawing conclusions from the data of this research and will be put to use in a variety of circumstance, beginning with conclusions related to the sources and types of information families use in their school choice process.



## **Conclusions Related to Sources and Types of Information**

### *The Primary Role of Informal/Relational Sources of Information*

The role of informal/relational networks as the primary source of information choosers utilize in their school choice process is reaffirmed in this study. Specifically, choosers overwhelmingly indicated that their first knowledge of CCP came through their word-of-mouth social networks – seventy percent specifying that such a network was how they first heard of the school – as well as that word-of-mouth networks are both most helpful and most important in terms of information leading to choice. Such a finding is consistent with school choice literature related to choice behaviors in the public school realm, as well. In their studies of school choice in Cincinnati and St. Louis public schools, for example, Smrekar and Goldring (1999) found that “in total, across all social classes, parents use social networks as a source of information about school choice more often than they use information formally disseminated” (p. 35-36).

It should be remembered, however, that while using such networks is clearly less “costly” to education consumers in that it is both an easier and more convenient source of information than sorting through school-based and formal/media sources, such sources do carry with them potential downsides. This is especially true for a tuition-based school like CCP where choosers come from higher income families. Therefore, exposing the school to diverse populations through networking is a concern. As the literature reminds us, “higher-income parents [have] higher quality ties to information networks than [do] lower-income parents – thus, the concerns of critics that school choice will exacerbate social class differences may have an empirical foundation” (Schneider, et. al., 2000, p. 112). Smrekar and Goldring (1999) echo this concern when they state, “Higher income families are more likely than lower-income families to use discussion with friends and

teachers as sources of information” (p. 36). The result, then, is that higher-income families have greater access to quality information through their social networks and use this source of information more frequently than do lower-income families. However, even if CCP were to specifically target areas related to socioeconomically diverse populations and strategize how to use the power of social networking to improve such diversity, the tuition costs would likely prevent these families from choosing the school even if they preferred such a choice – a reason why affordability is listed as a foundation factor in the two-factor theory of school choice. The use of social networking as the primary source of helpful and important information, therefore, limits exposure across various levels of the social strata and, therefore, perpetuates socioeconomic homogeneity in families that choose the school.

It should also be noted that not only is there a decrease in the possibilities of attracting a socioeconomically diverse set of choosers as the result of social networking, as a result of informal/relational sources of information being both the most helpful and most important source, homogeneity can also be expected in race, ethnicity, and – at a faith-based school such as Christian College Prep – Christian denominations. Social networking as the primary source of information, therefore, carries with it the likelihood of perpetuating familial homogeneity in all areas – including but not limited to socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and denominational practice.

Despite potential concerns that choice may homogenize denominational diversity, such diversity intersects in an ironic manner with informal/relational sources of information. While social networking, in general, is both important and helpful to choosers, such networking does not seem to include church members. This comes as a

surprise as the values espoused by CCP, as well as the families who already attend CCP, would appear to be a natural fit for the social networking involved in local churches. However, the data indicates that the families who successfully enroll at CCP do not consider members of their own churches as especially helpful or important sources of information in the choice process. In fact, families who choose CCP indicate that the school's website and other websites devoted to educational information are equally or more helpful information sources than church members. One plausible explanation for this apparent disconnect is that families responding to the surveys may be making a distinction between those church members that they consider friends and those that are acquaintances or relative strangers. In other words, in answering questions regarding sources of information, friends who attend the same church are identified by respondents as "friends" and not "church members" leading, therefore, to a low rating of church members, in general.

### *The Role of School-Based Sources of Information*

While informal/relational sources of information are, by far, the most broadly used information sources by choosers; there are two specific areas of school-based sources of information deemed essential in the choice process. These sources are personnel at the school and standardized test scores.

The first of these, school personnel, underscores the relational nature of the school choice process – a process similar in both public and independent school settings. Utilizing personnel – administrators, teachers, and the school's admissions office through student shadowing and individual tours – rates in the research as important sources of information. Teachers, for instance, are considered more important sources of

information than all but test scores and current school families. This data regarding the importance of personnel stands in contrast to the unimportance of other sources of information provided by the school. Non-relational items like newsletters, newspaper or magazine advertisements, and radio advertising all are seen as insignificant sources of information for choosers. The non-relational sources are not only rated as not important, they are also costly.

However, dissimilar in independent school choice from its public school counterpart is that public school choosers – especially low income and less educated populations – can be very intimidated by school-based sources of information, especially personnel, in gathering information. “For parents whose educational experiences were unhappy, unsuccessful, or short-lived, the idea of expanding the channels of communication with the district, the school, or an individual teacher in the process of exploring the [school] option may represent a formidable obstacle to choice” (Smrekar and Goldring, 1999, p. 45). A sense of intimidation or unease is not indicated in the CCP population as choosing families are not only demographically unlike those most often studied in the urban public school realm (CCP’s families identify themselves as highly educated and socioeconomically advantaged) but they also indicate that school-based sources of information gathered through the school’s website, visits with personnel, or tours and students shadowing are very helpful, important, and oft-used.

Amidst the compelling data that suggests relational connectedness, in general, is the most important and helpful source of information in school choice, one non-relational data point, specifically, stands apart and registers as the single most important source of information in the choice process – High School standardized test scores. As the Two-

Factor Theory of School Choice shows, this is the most important Foundational Factor identified by choosers. Without an agreeable report of standardized test scores, families will not continue in their consideration of the school. Of course, what is agreeable may differ from family to family. However, regardless of the associated score, it is imperative for the school to maintain test scores as high as possible, or it runs the risk of removing the most significant foundational factor and, with it, the impetus for families to see the distinctive cultural and philosophical factors the school offers to its students and families.

*Relational Connectedness & Test Scores as Important and Helpful Sources of Information*

Relational connectedness through both informal/relational sources of information and school-based personnel, therefore, is, generally, the most important aspect in the choice process of a nondenominational Christian education. Interestingly, though, it appears that choosing families see current families as their first and primary *partners* in choice while, secondarily, using school personnel and direct interaction with the school through tours, shadowing, and admission personnel as *data sources* to be used at the family's discretion. For instance, choosers do not cite uninvited phone calls or emails from the school as helpful even though they are relational in nature. Choosing families want to initiate the relationship with school-based personnel instead of having the school disseminate information to them unsolicited. To further accentuate this point, choosers do cite test scores and websites – unintrusive school-based sources of information to be used at the chooser's discretion and on their timetable – as both important and helpful. This final point – the role of unintrusive and empirical data that can be gathered at the chooser's discretion – is not only important in *how* choosers prefer to gather their

information, it also accentuates the important *role* that empirical data gathered via the web plays in the midst of, and as a necessary foundation to, relational connectedness.

*Indirect and Targeted Information Sources are Primary*

The data suggests that in conjunction with the use of informal/relational sources of information, additional sources of information that are considered by choosers as helpful and important, regardless of type, are sources that are indirect – that is, sources that the chooser can use at their discretion without direct contact with the school and its personnel or other, more direct relational interactions – or targeted, that is, sent to a specific and intended audience. For example, educational web sites (M=2.69), the school’s web site (2.81), and print material sent through the mail (2.57) all rate relatively high as helpful sources of information even though they come from either formal/media sources or school-based sources. Each of these sources are either indirect – they can be used by choosers at their discretion such as perusing websites in the evenings or on weekends – or are targeted – for example, potential choosers within a particular zip code or gifted students listed on a mass mailing distribution list.

However, print advertising (M=2.33), emails from schools (M=2.15), phone calls from schools (M=2.10), and radio advertising (1.63) – sources of information that are either direct in their connection with choosers (calls and emails) or represent a “shotgun” approach (radio and print advertising) – all rate low in terms of helpfulness. In fact, when looking closely at the data related to school-based sources of information, 29.3% of the respondents – families that, in the end, actually choose CCP – indicated that phone calls from the school were actually “unhelpful” in the choice process, while 23.5% indicated that emails from the school were “unhelpful.” When contrasted to the school’s website,

where only 1.9% of choosers indicated that the website was “unhelpful”, it should be considered that CCP’s use of phone calls and emails – direct and often unsolicited contact with choosers – may actually be *hindering* the progress of choosers in settling on Christian College Prep.

### **Summary of Results and Implications for Practice Related to Reasons for Choice**

This combination of empirical data in the form of test scores and relational connectedness becomes, then, the driving force behind families’ reasons for choosing nondenominational Christian education. Not only do families use relationships as the primary avenue for gathering helpful and important information, they also use relationships, in conjunction with test scores, in driving their reasons for ultimately choosing the school over other educational options.

Just as in the previous section, the Two-Factor Theory of School Choice is helpful in drawing conclusions as to the reasons families choose nondenominational, college preparatory Christian education. The starting point for reasons families chose the school, just as in the information they use in searching, are the Foundational Factors of the Two-Factor Theory. These factors seem to be assumed by families as they choose – factors such as school safety, adequate facilities, and a disciplined environment are taken for granted when choosing to pay a significant tuition for education. Without them, the choice process likely comes to a quick end. In addition, while not necessarily taken for granted, an affordable tuition payment is also a foundational factor without which the Factors of Ethos become mute. Most highly rated by choosers among the Foundational Factors, as we have already seen however, are the empirical data related to test scores. Again, families must be convinced that in the midst of safe, disciplined, and inviting

confines their children will have the academic rigor, proven by acceptable High School test scores, that attendance at a college preparatory school presumes.

While it is clear that Foundational Factors provide the starting point in the choice process, it is the Factors of Ethos that ultimately drive the final school choice. There are any number of schools that can provide adequate or exemplary Foundational Factors like rigor, safety, and discipline. It is, however, the distinguishing features in the second of the two factors – the Factors of Ethos – that allow schools of choice to separate themselves from their competition. At CCP, these Factors of Ethos are primarily what the author would term Christo-relational in nature – that is focused on meaningful relationships within a Christocentric environment. For example, the data from Table 4.6 definitively shows that Factors of Ethos such as student-to-teacher ratio and Christian Environment are measurably higher in terms of reasons for choice than the most important Foundational Factor, academic rigor.

More specifically, then, it is the culture of a relational Christian community that is the distinctive reason why families choose CCP. The connection between students and “faculty who model strong Christian faith and character traits,” when combined with “small class size” and “teacher-to-student ratio,” is paramount in a family’s reasons for choosing CCP. These factors directly relate, especially when combined with “Biblical integration in core content areas”, to the “spiritual development” of students. These are, in essence, the reasons why families believe that CCP compares favorably in terms of perceived value to other school choices and, therefore, why they chose the school over other options. Therefore, from how families first hear about the school, to the opinions of current CCP families, to the role their own children play in relaying their thoughts and



feelings to parents, all the way to small class sizes and faculty who model strong faith and character, *when families are satisfied with the Foundational Factors of the school*, Factors of Ethos – especially factors related to a relationally focused Christian community – drive choice.

### **Rational Choice Theory as the Linchpin between Information and Choice**

Rational Choice Theory, the theoretical framework described in Chapter 2, is the linchpin between sources of information utilized by choosers and the choosers reasons for choice of nondenominational, college preparatory Christian education. As the reader will recall from Figure 2.3, Rational Choice Theory posits that consumers filter their decision-making process first through information sources – in this case relational/informal, school-based, and formal/media – into three components that transform that information into reasons for choice – a chooser’s Hierarchy of Preferences, Opportunity Costs, and Institutional Constraints. When specifically applied to school choice, Rational Choice Theory would describe the choice of a school, therefore, as a “social outcome” (Friedman and Hechter, 1998, p. 202).

In combining the data related to research question one – types and sources of information used – with research question 2 – reasons for choice, the use of Rational Choice Theory provides focus, especially related to the theory’s use of Hierarchy of Preferences. For example, it seems counterintuitive to contend that families choosing a college preparatory educational setting for reasons other than academic rigor and college placement are making a “rational” choice. Most would argue, after all, that academic rigor and college placement are what makes the choice of a college preparatory education sensible. However, it is important to recognize that the conclusions of this research

clearly state that families are not taking in information about and then choosing a school for reasons *other* than academic rigor and college placement, only that families are assuming those items are already in place and using the school's ethos – the Christian culture and philosophy of the school – as the *differentiating factor* in choosing a nondenominational, college preparatory Christian education. This hierarchy of preferences, then – foundational factors related to rigor and academics satisfied and built upon through the selection of preferential items related to ethos – is connected with a Rational Choice paradigm. This is why Rational Choice Theory is crucial to understanding this research and why sources of information are inextricably linked to choice behavior of educational consumers throughout the study.

### **Summary of Data and Implications for Practice Related to Exit**

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the items measuring CCP's relative value in relation to other school types and the school's effectiveness in implementing Biblical integration in core content areas stand apart from all other variables when discussing exit from the school – with relative value in comparison to other schools being the only variable with statistical significance. Interestingly, both of these variables are included in the Factors of Ethos in the adaptation of Herzberg's two-factor theory – accentuating the importance of these variables in the choice process, both in choosing to attend the school and choosing to exit.

### *Foundational or Ethos Factors Can Lead to Exit*

It is important to realize that in determining factors related to exit that any variable – whether located in Foundational Factors or Factors of Ethos – can lead to the exit of a family. Whether a Factor of Ethos, like an increase in class size or a declining

impact on spiritual development, or a Foundational Factor, like dissatisfaction with the level of academic rigor or questioning the safety of the school environment, any variable has the potential to influence a family's perception of the school's value in relation to other school choice options. Interestingly in this research, however, is that while perception of value in comparison to other schools is a statistically significant finding, there are no other specific data points – either from within Foundational Factors or Factors of Ethos – that indicate what, in fact, exiters value more elsewhere or, conversely, what they rate as of lesser value at CCP. As is discussed below, exiters, in fact, rate their satisfaction of CCP quite high in every factored category and, therefore, rejecting the null for the research question related to exit is not done with one exception.

#### *Insignificant Differences between Exiters and Reenrollers*

Accentuating this point related to exiters' overall *satisfaction* with the school, and more important than any of the individual variables related to exit, is that the factored data collected regarding exit is unable to reject the null – that there are no statistically significant differences between exiters and reenrollees in terms of their level of satisfaction, with the exception of the subscale regarding relative value compared to other types of schools. In fact, none of the data regarding the six larger factors – Academic Factors, Spiritual Factors, Financial Factors, School Culture, Extra/Co-Curricular Factors, and Personnel – in this research is statistically significant. This is, undoubtedly, due in part to the small N size of the exiting population but, as a result, when discussing ramifications of the data regarding exit, it is important to remember the limitations of this study for finding significant differences in ratings of CCP between families that exit and

those that reenroll. Therefore, any conclusions related to exit should be viewed with caution.

On the contrary to showing dissatisfaction, then, the exit data suggest that exiters, just as reenrollees, are extremely favorable in their ratings of CCP. There is no indication from means comparisons, in fact, that any areas of dissatisfaction exists for exiters – let alone major differences from families that reenroll. The data indicate that reasons for family exit cannot be tied to a larger organizational cause but are reduced to individual factors unique to each family.

#### *Loyalty as the Preferable use of Hirschman's Theory*

Given the above results, it is justified to ponder if Hirschman's Exit, Voice, and Loyalty Theory is better applied with an alternate emphasis altogether – emphasizing the voice component of the framework over the exit component – to understand how consumer dissatisfaction influences the school choice process. In support of such a conclusion, Hirschman himself particularly cautions against the use of exit as a more effective component of his theory to determine and assist in the discernment of overall health in public service organizations like schools. For example, Hirschman acknowledges that “economist's [have a] bias against voice and in favor of exit” (Hirschman, 1980, p. 448) in utilizing feedback loops from consumers to drive organizational change. Adding additional emphasis to the preference of voice, when reflecting on the evolution of his theory, Hirschman convincingly states, “In the large portion of my book which was an essay in persuasion on behalf of voice I argued that voice can and should complement and occasionally supersede exit. . . I now find that my advocacy of voice was not exaggerated, but, on the contrary, too timid” (Hirschman,

1980, p. 431). In other words, while exit is an effective framework in many ways, voice should often, if not always, supersede exit in driving organizational change – especially in public service organizations where economic theory can be contextually misapplied or misused.

Therefore, when transferring Hirschman’s theory to a school setting, in general, and CCP in particular, exit as a theoretical construct, which emphasizes familial withdrawal from the school, should *not* be a driver of education reform. Voice, on the other hand, which focuses on families remaining connected to the school and transforming it from within, is a more powerful and appropriate component of Hirschman’s theory to be used in the educational realm. Such a cautious stance toward exit as a framework for reform, then, is certainly the prudent direction in summarizing the results of this research. The combination of a small N size, the positive perceptions of CCP by both exiters and reenrollees, and the lack of statistical significance for any specific factor related to exit sends a strong message to, at the very least, take any data – even the statistically significant data related to relative value in comparison to other schools – with an appropriately cautious perspective.

### **Implications for Policy**

A nondenominational Christian school, by its very nature and like all independent schools, is relatively free of overarching government policy mandates and oversight. Therefore, delineating implications for *policy* from this research is difficult. That is clearly not to say that further research regarding independent education and the ever-blurring line between public and private schooling as pictured in Figure 2.1 is unnecessary. Obviously, continued focus on the ramifications of decisions regarding

public funding – including but not limited to vouchers – in school reform, for example, or the role of diversity in race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status in the dialogue over school choice, and even the role of equity in the dissemination of information is crucial in understanding educational choice and reform. However, because of the “policy-free” nature of independent schooling a focus on larger policy issues is not the direct result of this research and, while this research may help support the findings of further studies of policy, implication for *practice* amongst independent schools is the focus of the summary herein.

### **Implications for Practice**

#### *Using Targeted Formal/Media Sources of Information*

One implication for practice has already been mentioned – the use by school board personnel and school administrators of voice instead of exit to drive school reform – but there are others that should be considered. A first example is the focused and intentional expansion of important sources of information beyond only informal/relational sources by utilizing formal/media sources. A second example, linked to the first, is the targeted use of families who are already enrolled in the school that represent diverse populations – racial/ethnic, denominational, or socioeconomic – in order to create a wider and more diverse population of families considering nondenominational, college preparatory Christian education.

One seemingly obvious starting point in implementing these propositions is the building of strategic partnerships with local churches and Christian organizations – especially groups that include populations underrepresented in the school’s current demographic. Rated low as a source of important or helpful information by families

currently enrolled at CCP, a community organization like a local church – an organization that espouses the same worldview and spiritual foundation as the school – focuses on meaningful relationships and is a natural connecting place and outlet to cast a wider net than what an informal/relational network can provide. Public school choice research provides ample background of the limits of informal/relational networking as a source of information by showing that an informal/relational focus between those already enrolled in a school of choice and those currently involved in the choice process serves to perpetuate the demographic norms already in place within the school. As a nondenominational Christian school that seeks greater socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and denominational diversity, purposefully going beyond informal/relational sources and leveraging media/formal source of information like the community resource of local churches is a strategy that should be investigated.

This strategy does come with two caveats, however. First, should the school be successful in drawing a larger, and assumingly lower, socioeconomic class of chooser in the midst of its efforts to add diversity, it must also be prepared to provide financial assistance to those families. Overwhelmingly, the school's current population does not consider cost as a factor in their school choice process with over 70% not even listing it as one of the top five considerations in their choice of the school. If information about the school widens, with families seeking entrance including a greater diversity in socioeconomic status, and then a lack of meaningful financial assistance does not allow for enrollment, the percentage of enrolled families who are unconcerned about economic considerations will remain exceedingly high and socioeconomic diversity will continue to be an elusive target. Second, if the school is successful in attracting larger, more

racially/ethnically and/or denominationally diverse populations, it must be prepared to accept their influence and opinions if the enrollment of these diverse populations is to be sustained. In terms of governance, assimilation strategies, and pedagogy – among other things – greater diversity cannot be sustained without greater inclusion of diverse voices in the structure and culture of the school. Upon enrolling a more diverse population and its cacophony of voices and opinions, CCP, and other independent schools like it, will determine if diversity is an espoused theory or an actual theory-in-use through discovering processes that unify varied constituents around its mission of academic rigor and Christ-centered environment.

A third caveat, which requires CCP to monitor its distinctive ethos while simultaneously reaching out to a wider array of potential families, is that lower socioeconomic status is often accompanied by lower test scores since, at least in the aggregate, lower income students underperform compared to their more affluent peers (Coleman, 1972). This confluence of data makes it even more difficult, and, therefore, will also require CCP to be more diligent in attracting an increasingly diverse population of students that also meets its academically rigorous requirements.

#### *Monitoring Factors of Ethos for Alignment with the School's Distinctive Mission*

While seeking to expand its availability and attractiveness to a greater socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, and denominational population, the school must simultaneously monitor the very factors that make the school distinct among its competition. These Factors of Ethos which, as previously mentioned, truly drive choice behaviors are the lifeblood of any school of choice and, therefore, cannot be diffused if the school is to remain true to its mission. (Another alternative, obviously, is to alter that



mission for the sake of including a more diverse population.) In the case of CCP, this means that while attracting diverse populations the school must be sure that it does not increase class size, compromise on the spiritual development of constituents, or decrease its emphasis on service and extra-curriculars – all items that focus on a relationally-based Christian community and relate to its value in comparison to other schools. Reaching out to increasingly diverse populations – whether they are racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, or denominational – must not diminish the school’s focus on its other Factors of Ethos if it is to remain a viable entity on the school choice landscape.

### *Divergence Away from Spending on Media Advertising*

An additional implication for practice is related to school spending on media sources of information for choosers – specifically advertising. Rated by choosers far below all other sources of information in terms of helpfulness and importance, items like magazine, newspaper, and radio advertisement dollars generate little, if any, measurable return. In fact, other than a small percentage who acknowledge that they first heard of CCP through an advertisement (4.8%), there are no other data that suggests advertisement is either helpful or important once the choice process for families begins. In contrast, the data show an almost equally low percentage of choosers acknowledge that that they first heard of CCP through the website (3.1%) while also reporting that this source of information is both important and helpful in the choice process that follows. Use of a school website and websites devoted to educational information, therefore, provide a first contact source of information for families while also allowing families to search for helpful and important information at their own pace during the choice process. Websites that imbed video as well as utilize text are able to showcase both Foundational Factors

and Factors of Ethos of prospective schools in a format that choosers prefer and thoughtfully utilize.

Therefore, as a matter of practice, the diversion of funds to additional admissions personnel in order to enhance and bolster the relational connectedness needed by choosers and discussed above, and/or a diversion of funds to create a greater website and internet presence as delineated in this section makes good sense. Doing so aligns financial resources with sources of information that already successfully enrolled families indicate are both important and helpful in the choice process. While providing such outlets for the flow of information may cause CCP to incur more up-front costs in terms of time spent, technology needed, or the use of personnel, it is conversely less costly and much more efficient and effective for choosers than contact via advertisement or other formal/media sources of information, therefore, creating a “win” for choosers and, in the end, a “win” for the school.

### **Implications for Further Study**

#### *Highlighting Voice in Hirschman’s Framework*

Emphasizing the voice component of Hirschman’s Exit, Voice and Loyalty Theory as a driver of school reform instead of the exit component, as discussed previously, is a significant recommendation for further research, not only at CCP but also in any research related to school choice – especially independent school choice which, free from much of government’s accountability and oversight, is driven by market forces much more directly than its public school counterpart. Further research could also include theoretical frameworks such as Decision-Output Theory and Dissatisfaction Theory – both discussed briefly in Chapter 2 – as these theories, just as is the case with voice, seek

to measure the impact of consumers as they remain actively involved in, not removing themselves from, the choice process.

With the above recommendations in mind, should researchers still desire to utilize the exit component of Hirschman's framework, two particular recommendations for further study should be considered. First, improving the return rate of exiter feedback and, thus, increasing the sample size of exiters within a quantitative study in order to increase statistical power would be essential. This raises a serious challenge should the researcher utilize an *ex post facto* design, as is the case in this study. If the researcher uses *ex post facto* methods, there is always the risk that the N size will turn out to be too small to generate statistical power and, then, follow-up to gather additional data becomes, in a practical sense, difficult and, in a methodological sense, questionable. However, equally difficult, should the researcher utilize other quantitative methods, is convincing exiters to share their thoughts with researchers through the use of quantitative methods after they have already decided to leave the school. Therefore, analyzing school choice through Hirschman's exit component by utilizing *qualitative* methods, perhaps through focus group feedback or individual interviews, could produce meaningful results.

#### *Utilizing the Two-Factor Theory of School Choice*

In addition to a different theoretical framework regarding Hirschman's voice component, or utilizing Dissatisfaction Theory or Decision-Output Theory, couching research regarding school choice within the Two-Factor Theory of School Choice adapted from Herzberg – as introduced in this study – could provide a significant new framework for understanding school choice behavior – especially the rarely studied processes of independent school choice. Discovering whether variables such as

discipline, safety, and academic rigor are consistently seen as Foundational Factors in other choice contexts, as well as generating varied constructs for what constitute Factors of Ethos that can be compared across school types, could provide significant insight into both public and independent school choice behaviors.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The role of private schools – especially religious and independent Christian schools – is a relatively ignored piece of the school choice puzzle. This void exists despite the fact that “the market-place for parents in urban districts includes magnet schools, charter schools, and private schools” (Goldring and Rowley, 2006, p. 1) and “seventy-nine percent of all private schools had a religious affiliation in 1999–2000: 30 percent . . . affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, and 49 percent with other religious groups” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 3). Therefore, emphasizing research in public urban schools at the expense of additional findings from other school types ignores the choice behavior of a large portion of the choosing population – missing the insights that can be gleaned and then utilized in a variety of school contexts.

The expanding availability and use of internet sources, the differing uses of formal/media and school-based information, the need for relational connectedness among choosers, and discovering the multi-dimensional and hierarchical nature of the factors that drive school choice – especially as the lines between public and private education are blurred – are all areas of school choice, regardless of the type or location of schools, that need to be examined. In addition, with increased choice options within relatively small geographic regions and even within local school districts, increasingly mobile families will require schools to examine more closely the reasons for familial exit just as much as

their reasons for choice. The marketplace of school choice is expanding and educational researchers must increase their knowledge of the pressure points and choice behaviors of families if American education is to remain competitive in the global arena.

## APPENDIX A: CHRISTIAN COLLEGE PREP MARKETING SURVEY

Thank you again for your participation. Your responses will help us better understand how to provide service to the families and students of CCP.

How did you first hear about CCP?

- Can't remember
- Word of mouth - friend
- Word of mouth - neighbor
- Word of mouth - coworker
- Word of mouth - employer
- Information session/open house event
- Print advertisement
- Email advertisement
- Radio advertisement
- Mailing (letter, postcard, brochure, etc.)
- Website
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

As a follow up to the previous question, which phrase best describes the impression you had from the introduction to CCP?

- Can't remember
- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neutral
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative

Please rate, if applicable, how helpful each of the following sources of information are when deciding on a school for your children.

	Not applicable	Helpful	Somewhat helpful	Unsure	Unhelpful
Email messages from schools					
Phone calls from schools					
School Website					
Websites that act as a resource for general school information					
Print					

advertising  
 (newspapers,  
 magazines)  
 Radio  
 advertising  
 Print materials  
 sent through  
 the mail  
 CCP  
 families  
 Church  
 members

From the list of options, please choose five that you consider to be the most important sources of information when making the decision to send your child to CCP.

Achievement test scores  
 Student shadowing  
 Classroom visit  
 Individual tour  
 Open house  
 Informational meetings at another community organization  
 School newsletter or flier  
 Newspaper or magazine ad  
 Educational-oriented Websites  
 CHCA Website  
 Admissions office at CCP  
 Teachers at CCP  
 Guidance counselor at CCP  
 Principal at CCP  
 Your child's impressions/preferences of CCP  
 Your other children's experience at CCP  
 Other family members  
 Current CCP families  
 Friends or neighbors

Your selections for the top five most important sources of information are listed below. Please rank these five sources of information in terms of their relative importance when making the decision to send your child to CCP. (Mark only one item as the most important, another as 2nd, and so on.)

	Most important	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Achievement test scores					
Student shadowing					
Classroom visit					
Individual tour					
Open house					
Informational meetings at another community					

organization  
School newsletter or flier  
Newspaper or magazine ad  
Educational-oriented  
Websites  
CCP Website  
Admissions office at CCP  
Teachers at CCP  
Guidance counselor at CCP  
Principal at CCP  
Your child's  
impressions/preferences of  
CCP  
Your other children's  
experience at CCP  
Other family members  
Current CCP families  
Friends or neighbors

How do you prefer to communicate with potential schools? (Select up to two responses.)

Mailings (print materials)  
Emails  
Phone calls  
Personal visits to the school  
Information sessions in school, church, or community  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following individuals did you find most helpful as you decided which school to attend? (Select one.)

No one individual was most helpful  
Current family  
Current student  
Admissions Counselor  
Teacher  
Principal  
Former student  
Fellow employee  
Family member  
Friend/neighbor  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

What proportion of the decision on which school your child(ren) would attend was made by the parents/guardians of the household and what proportion of the decision depended on the child(ren)'s preference? Please fill in the proportion of the decision that came from you and the proportion dependent on your child(ren) so that the two proportions add up to 100.

Parents \_\_\_\_\_



Child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following Websites do you most frequently visit? (Select all that apply.)

Do not use the Internet

Yahoo

MSN

Google

AOL

Profile networking Websites (MySpace, Facebook, etc.)

Wikipedia

eBay

CNN

ESPN

Cincinnati Enquirer ([www.enquirer.com](http://www.enquirer.com))

Cincinnati Post ([www.cincypost.com](http://www.cincypost.com))

Cincinnati.Com ([www.cincinnati.com](http://www.cincinnati.com))

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Which, if any, of the following education Websites did you use when making your school choice?

US Government Website ([www.Ed.gov](http://www.Ed.gov))

Great Schools ([www.GreatSchools.net](http://www.GreatSchools.net))

Council for American Private Education ([www.capenet.org](http://www.capenet.org))

Private School Review ([www.privateschoolreview.com](http://www.privateschoolreview.com))

National Association of Independent Schools ([www.nais.org](http://www.nais.org))

Independent Schools Association of the Central States ([www.isacs.org](http://www.isacs.org))

Association of Christian Schools International ([www.acsi.org](http://www.acsi.org))

Ohio Association of Independent Schools ([www.oais.org](http://www.oais.org))

None of the above

Other \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you visit the CCP Website?

Frequently

Often

Regularly

Every once in a while

Rarely

Never

Which, if any, of the following radio stations do you listen to?

WMWX 88.9FM

WGUC 90.9FM

WVXU 91.7FM

WOFX 92.5FM  
WAKW 93.3FM  
WVMX 94.1FM  
The Sound 94.9FM  
WYGY 96.5FM  
WRRM 98.5FM  
WKRQ 101.9FM  
WEBN 102.7FM  
WGRR 103.5FM  
WNLT 104.3FM  
WUBE 105.1FM  
WKFS 107.1FM  
WKRC 550AM  
WLW 700AM  
WUBE 1230AM  
WCIN 1480AM  
WSAI 1530AM  
I use satellite radio  
I never use the radio  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Which time of the day do you most often listen to the radio?

Morning Drive Time (6:00 - 9:00 a.m.)  
Morning (9:01 a.m. - Noon)  
Early Afternoon (12:01 - 3:00 p.m.)  
Afternoon Drive Time (3:01 - 7:00 p.m.)  
Evening (After 7:00 p.m.)

Which, if any, of the following publications have you read in the past year? If there is a publication that you often read and it is not listed, please provide us with the name of this publication in the choice for "other." (Please select all that apply.)

I do not typically read publications  
Christian Blue Pages  
All About Kids  
Best Magazine  
Catholic Telegraph  
Cincinnati Business Courier  
Cincinnati Enquirer  
Cincinnati Family  
Cincinnati Magazine  
Cincinnati Women  
Community Press Papers  
Hometown Enquirer  
In Touch Magazine  
Pulse Journal

Other \_\_\_\_\_

While gathering information about independent schools, what was your preferred time to attend an informational session?

Weekday

Weeknight

Weekend

Other \_\_\_\_\_

How many times do you need to visit a school before making a final decision?

not necessary to visit

1

2

3

4

more than 4

If someone asked you about CCP, how would you most likely direct someone to learn more?

I would give them the phone number of CCP

I would tell them to visit CCP

I would refer them to a specific teacher/staff member at CCP

I would tell them to visit the CCP Website

I would provide them with CCP pamphlets, fliers or other printed information

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please select the following factors that were most important in your school selection process: (Select up to 5 responses)

Cost

Class size

School size

Student activities and extracurricular programs

Opportunities for athletics

Academic excellence

Academic subject matter

High test scores

College preparation

Christ-centered environment

Christian mission

Location

Facilities

Technology (use in classroom/curriculum)

Reputation in my community

Safety  
 Ethnically diverse environment  
 Positive peer environment  
 Quality teachers  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate which kinds of schools exemplify the most important factors in your school search process. (More than one type of school can be selected for each factor)

	None of the following	Public Schools	Alternative Public Schools	Charter Schools	Magnet Schools	Virtual Schools	Religious private	Secular private	Homeschooling
Cost									
Class size									
School size									
Student activities and extracurricular programs									
Opportunities for athletics									
Academic excellence									
Academic subject matter									
High test scores									
College preparation									
Christ-centered environment									
Christian mission									
Location									
Facilities									
Technology (use in classroom/curriculum)									
Reputation in my community									
Safety									
Ethnically diverse environment									
Positive peer environment									
Quality teachers									
%Q1SPECIFIED_20%									

Which of the following is the most important outcome of elementary and secondary school learning?



- Basic skills (i.e., reading, writing, mathematics, speaking)
- Good work habits and self-discipline
- Independent thought and self-motivation
- Ability to understand and get along with others from different social backgrounds and races
- Development of high moral standards
- Building self-esteem
- College preparation
- Developing specialized skills (e.g., dance, art, technology, vocational)
- Integration of knowledge with Biblical principles

How important is a values-based education when you are searching for schools?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Neutral
- Of little importance
- Not important at all

When deciding where to send your child(ren) to school, was CCP your first choice, second choice, or third choice? (Please mark only one response.)

- My first choice
- My second choice
- My third choice

Please rate the following aspects of Christian College Prep in terms of their overall importance in your decision to choose CCP?

	Unsure	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all
Biblical integration in all subject areas						
Faculty who model strong Christian faith and character traits						
High degree of parent involvement						
Weekly chapels with high student involvement						
Service						

opportunities  
Modern well-  
equipped,  
inviting  
facilities  
High School  
2-week  
Winter Term  
allowing  
missions,  
service, and  
experiential  
learning  
College  
acceptances

Which of the of the following statements about CCP's academics most reflects your desire for your child(ren)'s education?

CCP education provides a well rounded program; academically, spiritually, and socially.

Our worldview is Christian and our academic programs reflect this in a vital and systemic manner.

Rigorous academics prepare one hundred percent of graduates to enter four year colleges or universities equipped to succeed.

Modern, well-equipped facilities are provided in each building that include a library, gymnasium, cafeteria, computer lab, art room with kiln, fulltime nurse, and welcoming classrooms and gathering spaces.

Parents are active supporters and partners in their child's education and are honored by educators.

A CCP education allows young people to face an ever-changing world grounded in unchanging wisdom.

None of the above.

Which of the following statements about CCP most reflects your desires for your child(ren)'s learning environment?

The lives of our staff, the personality of our campus, the criteria which measure our educational program are a reflection of Christ's values and teachings.

CCP prepares students intellectually and spiritually for success in higher education and to impact and influence the world according to their unique gifts and talents.

We are devoted to developing the whole person, and instilling a lifelong passion for learning, leading and serving.

Which of the following CCP beliefs do you hold most dear?

A Christ-centered environment

Academic excellence  
Educating the whole person  
Outreach/Service  
Leadership development  
Stewardship  
Value of each person  
Vibrant, engaged community  
Accountability  
Joyful spirit

Please rate the importance of the following features/attributes of a school during your school selection process.

	Unsure	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all
Total number of teachers available on campus						
Teacher to student ratio						
Average class size						
Percent of high school faculty with advanced degrees						
Percent of faculty with doctorates						
Spiritual development						
Number of students receiving scholarships upon graduation						
Percent of students participating in extracurricular activities						
Number of Advanced Placement courses						
Advanced Placement						

Exam  
performance  
EBL  
Elementary  
Stanford  
Achievement  
Score  
Average CCP  
Middle School  
Stanford  
Achievement  
Score  
SAT score  
performance

Which of the following explanations best explain why your child(ren) attend(s) CCP?  
(Please select up to three)

The location is close to my home, job, or child care  
My child's friends attend the school  
The school's strong academic reputation  
The Christ-centered environment  
Biblical integration in all content subjects  
The principal  
Good teachers  
My child was performing poorly at previous school  
CCP's Vision, Mission, and Values  
The athletic program  
High test scores of students attending CCP  
J-term  
This school has good physical facilities  
The racial/ethnic mix at the school  
Smaller class sizes  
The fine arts program  
Extracurricular programming  
The teaching style of the school  
Before and/or after school child care  
Discipline  
Opportunities for parental involvement  
The school is safe  
My child wanted to attend this school  
The school teaches values that traditional public schools do not  
I have another child in the same school  
I was unhappy with the curriculum at previous school  
I was unhappy with the instruction at previous school  
Recommendations of teacher or official at my child's previous school  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Has CCP lived up to your expectations?



Yes  
No  
Too soon to tell

Please explain how CCP lived up to your expectations.

---

---

---

Please explain why CCP did not live up to your expectations.

---

---

---

How has your child specifically benefited from their experience at CCP?

---

---

---

Can CCP use your name and comments as a testimonial in marketing and promotional materials?

Yes  
No

Thank you very much on behalf of the school. We appreciate your thoughts and willingness to share them with potential CCP students in the future.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years experience with CCP \_\_\_\_\_

If given the opportunity, would you choose CCP again for your child?

Yes  
No  
Not sure

Do you expect that the outcome of a CCP education will more than make up for the financial investment in tuition costs?

Guaranteed  
Likely  
Unsure  
Unlikely

In one word or phrase, describe your general impression of CCP.

CCP is \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to recommend CCP to a family or student?

Yes

No

Thank you for your willingness to recommend CCP to interested people. If available, please provide the name and preferred contact information of a student/parent that might benefit from information about CCP. We are happy to provide them with information about the school.

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Description \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Is there an additional person that you would like to recommend to CCP?

Yes

No

Thank you for your willingness to recommend CCP to interested people. If available, please provide the name and preferred contact information of a student/parent that might benefit from information about CCP. We are happy to provide them with information about the school.

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Description \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

#### Background Information

Only a few more questions to go! The following questions are primarily for classification purposes and they will also help us properly analyze responses to this survey. Your answers will always be kept strictly confidential.

Please provide the following (optional):

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
Education \_\_\_\_\_  
Household/Family income \_\_\_\_\_

In which grades do you have children enrolled at CCP this year? (Please mark a grade level only for each child you have enrolled. Leave other fields blank, if necessary.)

First Child \_\_\_\_\_  
Second Child \_\_\_\_\_  
Third Child \_\_\_\_\_  
Fourth Child \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have children not attending CCP?

Yes  
No

In what type(s) of school(s) are your other children enrolled? (Mark all that apply)

Not old enough, but planning on being in preschool  
Not old enough, but in preschool  
Public school (traditional)  
Private school, non-religious  
Parochial/religious-affiliated school  
Home schooled  
Another charter school  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

For your preschool age children, approximately how many miles do you live from your current preschool (or planned preschool choice)?

Have not decided on a preschool yet  
1-2 miles  
3-5 miles  
5-10 miles  
10-20 miles  
More than 20 miles

For your preschool age children, how interested would you be in a CCP preschool; a preschool which would be both Christ-centered and academically enriched?

Very interested  
Somewhat interested  
Interested  
Not interested

Approximately how many miles would you be willing to drive to enroll your child in a Christ-centered, academically enriched preschool?

- 1-2 miles
- 3-5 miles
- 5-10 miles
- 10-20 miles
- More than 20 miles

Can you please provide the birth year of your children who are younger than kindergarten age? (Please indicate an age only for those children who are younger than kindergarten age. Leave other fields blank, if necessary.)

First Child \_\_\_\_\_  
Second Child \_\_\_\_\_  
Third Child \_\_\_\_\_  
Fourth Child \_\_\_\_\_

In which grade level will your schoolage children not attending CCP be enrolled this year? (Please mark only one grade level for each child enrolled. Leave other fields blank, if necessary.)

First Child \_\_\_\_\_  
Second Child \_\_\_\_\_  
Third Child \_\_\_\_\_  
Fourth Child \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide any additional comments about Christian College Prep that you believe might be helpful in understanding how to best communicate with individuals who may be interested in CHCA in the future.

---

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## **APPENDIX B: CHRISTIAN COLLEGE PREP CONSTITUENT SURVEY— PARENT SURVEY**

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Thank you for taking the time to participate in this school-wide survey of CCP families. Our intent with this survey is to identify opportunities for continuing to improve upon the work that we, the CCP Board, Administration, Faculty and Staff, do in partnership with the Lord and families in the education of their children. For families with one or two children attending CCP, you will respond to questions pertinent to the building each attends, in addition to the questions that ask you to respond with an overall perspective. For families with more than two students attending CCP, we have randomly selected two of your students and ask you respond to each set of questions pertinent to those buildings/programs in addition to the questions from an overall perspective. Thank you. This survey will take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete. Please note that you can complete all of the survey in one setting, or, you may bookmark the site and return to complete the survey at a second point in time. We recommend that you complete the survey within a relatively short time period.

---

### **Background**

All surveys must be completed by March 3. At that time, the survey will be taken off the web so that the results can be tabulated. Please note that your responses will remain completely anonymous. We will be analyzing the data in aggregate so that no one will be able to identify a specific teacher or a specific student or family.

---

Some portions of the survey will concern your opinions about the school overall. In other portions of the survey, we will ask you to answer the questions in relation to each of your children. We would like you to answer all of the questions in the survey. However, you are able to skip those questions for which you do not choose to answer. The survey will not require that you answer all questions.

-----

1. Please enter your secured access code here:

-----

2. Please indicate which category(ies) best describes you. Please mark all categories that are appropriate. This data will be used to determine which set of questions should be asked and for classification purposes.

CCP Parent (currently have students at CCP)

CCP Past Parent (no longer have students at CCP)

CCP Faculty

CCP Staff

CCP Administration

CCP Board of Trustees

Other

=====

3. Please describe your category:

=====

4. STUDENT Please indicate your building or division affiliation:

(01) Armleder-Grade 5

- (02) Armleder-Grade 6
- (03) Armleder-Grade 7
- (04) Armleder-Grade 8
- (05) Middle School-Grade 5
- (06) Middle School-Grade 6
- (07) Middle School-Grade 7
- (08) Middle School-Grade 8
- (09) High School-Grade 9
- (10) High School-Grade 10
- (11) High School-Grade 11
- (12) High School-Grade 12

---

---

5. CONSTITUENT Please indicate which category(ies) best describes you.

- (1) CCP Faculty
- (2) CCP Staff
- (3) CCP Administration
- (4) CCP Board of Trustees

---

---

6. CONSTITUENT Please indicate your building or division affiliation

- (1) Armleder Elementary
- (2) Lindner Elementary
- (3) Middle School
- (4) High School

(5) CCP Board of Trustees

-----

7. Please indicate the grade levels in which you currently have children enrolled at CCP:

Pre-Kindergarten

Developmental Kindergarten/Kindergarten-Prep

Kindergarten

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

-----

8. In which elementary school is your student enrolled?

(1) Armleder

(2) Lindner



-----  
9. In which school is your fifth/sixth grade student enrolled

(1) Armleder

(2) North Campus  
-----

Please answer the following questions about your child in grade

xx. 1  
-----

The first portion of the survey concerns CCP's Vision, Mission and Values. VISION Christian College Prep will unleash each student's God-given gifts through Christ-centered academic excellence. We are devoted to developing the whole person, and instilling a lifelong passion for learning, leading and serving. Christian College Prep Unleashing a passion To learn, To lead, To serve. MISSION Christian College Prep is a Christ-Centered, Non-Denominational, College Preparatory Academy that exists to: Prepare students intellectually and spiritually for success in higher education and to impact and influence the world according to their unique gifts and talents. This will be accomplished by: 1. Creating an environment that encourages students, faculty, staff and families to develop and live out their relationship in Jesus Christ. 2. Developing a passion for lifelong learning that leads to thoughtful, effective service through excellent, intentional curriculum and extra-curricular offerings. 3. Empowering outstanding Christian faculty and staff to fully use their passions and expertise to create engaged critical thinkers. 4. Fostering an exceptional environment that develops students' gifts and talents in the arts, athletics, leadership, and additional extra-curricular opportunities for

God's purposes. 5. Building an engaged school community - encompassing faculty, staff, students, families, alumni, and donors - that reinforces the school's vision, mission, and core values.

-----

## Section 1

-----

10. CCP achieves its mission statement in all four buildings.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

11. CCP achieves its mission statement at my student's/my building.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----  
12. I understand how the school carries out the overall mission of CCP.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

13. When my student first entered the school, I had an accurate understanding of CCP.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

14. It is important that CCP's community of students, faculty, and staff be diverse in:

Ethnic and Racial Background

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree

- (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

15. It is important that CCP's community of students, faculty,  
and staff be diverse in: Socio-economic status

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

16. It is important that CCP's community of students, faculty, and staff be diverse in:  
Religious denominations

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

CCP's Core Values (listed below) are successfully implemented in the way the school operates in:

-----

17. Academic excellence- meaning as an academy of learning it is our primary but not exclusive goal to prepare students academically for college and beyond.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

18. Christ-Centeredness-- meaning following how Christ himself led, served, taught, loved, and lived; we strive to base all we do on His word.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

19. The Whole Person-- recognizing all are gifted by God in unique ways, we believe in developing all forms of those spiritual, intellectual, artistic and athletic gifts in each student to their fullest potential.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

20. Servant Leadership- Believing in the power of servanthood, servant leadership will be taught, modeled and encouraged to all students, staff and parents so that all are equipped for the situations in life that God calls them to lead.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

21. Outreach/Service- modeling Christ in all we do, we will provide opportunity daily and through special events for students, staff, and parents to share Christ's love through service and witness to others.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

22. Stewardship- Acknowledging we are blessed in many ways, we as a school will model strong fiscal stewardship and will encourage, train and expect students, staff and parents to be wise and generous stewards over their time, talents, and money.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

23. The Value of Each Person- demonstrating biblical equality, we embrace each individual as a distinct creation of God, ensure an emotionally, socially and physically safe and nurturing environment and intentionally enroll a student body, faculty and staff that reflect the socioeconomic and racial make-up of the community in which we live.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

24. A Vibrant Sense of Community- acting intentionally, we will foster a vibrant, connected culture of caring, fellowship and respect among students, staff and parents.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree



-----  
25. Accountability- holding ourselves and each other to the highest standards of integrity, excellence and to constant, measurable improvement

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

26. A Joyful Spirit- having an attitude of gratitude for God's blessings that are lived out in every day smiles, laughter, and by celebrating demonstrated character and unique achievements. This results in a contagious joy that connects at the heart level.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

This portion of the survey concerns spiritual dimensions of CCP:

-----  
27. Every school employee that my student meets appears to have an obvious personal, active relationship with Jesus Christ.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

28. The Chapel programs engage my student in ways that encourage a relationship with and growth in Christ.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

29. The Christian Studies program helps my student develop appropriate value for Scripture.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----

30. CCP provides spiritual growth and spiritual leadership opportunities for my student.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----

31. CCP has allocated sufficient financial and staffing resources toward the mission of being Christ-centered.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

32. CCP has helps students see the connection between Biblical truth and: Athletics

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

33. Biblical truth and Christian Studies

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

34. Biblical truth and Computer Sciences

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

35. Biblical truth and Fine Arts

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

36. Biblical truth and Foreign Language

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

### 37. Biblical truth and Language Arts/English

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

### 38. Biblical truth and Math

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

39. Biblical truth and Sciences (Biology, Chemistry,)

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----

40. Biblical truth and Social Sciences (History, Geography,...)

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----

This portion of the survey concerns CCP's school community.

-----

41. CCP encourages students to develop their skills and interests.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree

- (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

42. CCP helps students grow spiritually.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

43. CCP is a friendly place for students and it is easy for them to make friends here.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree



-----  
44. CCP encourages professional development for faculty.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----  
45. CCP has appropriate school spirit and pride.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----  
46. CCP has an appropriate gender balance among students.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

47. CCP has an appropriate level of ethnic and racial diversity  
among students.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

48. CCP has an appropriate gender balance among its faculty.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

49. CCP has an appropriate level of ethnic and racial diversity among its faculty.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

50. CCP provides high value for the cost of tuition.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

These questions concern your student's faculty.

-----

51. Faculty are approachable, available and easy to relate to.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

52. Faculty are respectful.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

53. Faculty are responsive.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

54. Faculty are involved in the lives of students.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

55. Faculty serve as strong spiritual role models.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

56. Faculty CCP recruits quality staff.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

57. CCP retains quality staff.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

58. Faculty appear to be paid fairly for their contributions.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

These questions concern your student's building principal.

-----

59. The principal is approachable, available and easy to relate to.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

60. The principal is respectful.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

61. The principal is responsive.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

62. The principal is involved in the lives of students.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

63. The principal serves as a strong spiritual role model.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree



(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

64. The principal appears to be paid fairly for his/her contributions.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

This portion of the survey concerns your student's peers at CCP.

---

85. Students demonstrate respect for fellow students.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----  
86. Students demonstrate respect for faculty.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

87. Students demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to the school.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

88. Students are treated fairly by faculty and administrators.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree

- (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

89. Students place a high priority on obeying the rules.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

90. Students have many opportunities to be highly involved.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

---

91. Students have satisfactory learning opportunities outside the classroom.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

---

92. Students are growing spiritually at CCP.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

---

This portion of the survey concerns CCP's parents.

---

93. CCP's parents demonstrate involvement in the school.

- (1) Strongly agree

- (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

94. CCP's parents show respect for faculty and administrators.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

95. CCP's parents demonstrate support for the school.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

96. CCP's parents have ample opportunity to volunteer at the school.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

97. CCP's parents know how they can contribute to the success of the school's mission.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

98. CCP's parents are growing spiritually through their connections to CCP.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

- (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

99. CCP's parents appear to be generally satisfied with the school.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

This portion of the survey concerns CCP's academic programs.

---

100. The emphasis on academics is appropriate.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

101. The quality of academics is high.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

102. Faculty use a variety of instructional strategies appropriate to their content area/grade level.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

103. Students experience continuity of education across the grade levels and buildings.



- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

104. Faculty are professional.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

105. Students are challenged academically.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

106. Student is continuously growing academically.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

107. I have a reasonable understanding of what is going on in my student's classroom.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

This portion of the survey concerns CCP's academic programs.

-----

108. Classrooms are well equipped for the learning that takes place there.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

109. Student has a positive attitude about CCP.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

110. Student academic achievement is effectively recognized.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

111. Classrooms are well managed.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

112. Discipline is fairly administered.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

113. Academic programs provide opportunities to learn about diverse cultures.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----

114. CCP delivers an education based on a Christian worldview.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----

115. Parents receive timely, accurate, and adequate information for their families to be prepared for the start of the school year.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

This portion of the survey concerns spiritual dimensions of CCP:

-----

These areas of school life have a positive impact on the spiritual life of my student:

-----

116. Academic classes have a positive impact on spiritual life.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

117. Athletics have a positive impact on spiritual life.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

118. Chapel Program has a positive impact on spiritual life.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

119. Christian Studies have a positive impact on spiritual life.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

120. Fine Arts have a positive impact on spiritual life.

(1) Strongly agree

- (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

121. Service Program has a positive impact on spiritual life.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

These members of the school community demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principles in interaction with students and each other:

-----

122. Administration demonstrates godly behavior based on Biblical principles in interaction with students and each other.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree



- (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

124. Coaches and Athletic Staff demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principles in interaction with students and each other.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

125. Parents demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principles in interaction with students and each other.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

126. Faculty demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principals in interaction with students and each other.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

127. Staff demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principals in interaction with students and each other.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

The following communication tools are important resources for my family:

-----

128. The following communication tools are important resources for my family: Back-to-School Night

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----

This portion of the survey concerns technology:

-----

142. Student learning in content areas is enhanced by technology use.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----

146. Students are successfully learning to use technology to enhance their learning experience.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

This portion of the survey concerns facilities:

-----

147. CCP's landscaping and grounds are appropriately maintained.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

148. Buildings and grounds personnel demonstrate professionalism.

(1) Strongly agree

- (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

149. CCP facilities are safe.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

153. CCP's athletic fields and spectator facilities are appropriately maintained.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

This portion of the survey concerns the dress code:

-----

157. I am satisfied with the dress code.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

158. I am satisfied with how CCP enforces the dress code.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

Section III

-----  
This FINAL section of the survey concerns your general impressions of CCP.

-----  
This portion of the survey concerns spiritual dimensions of CCP:

-----  
824. I/my student and I am/are actively involved in the ministries of my local church.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----  
This portion of the survey concerns communication issues:

-----  
826. The CCP website meets my needs when I visit it for school information.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

830. I receive timely, accurate, and adequate information for our family to be prepared for the start of the school year.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

831. The CCP phone system meets my needs.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

832. I know whom to contact at CCP if I have a question.

(1) Strongly agree



- (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

This portion of the survey concerns the development and endowment areas.

---

833. I understand how the funds that are contributed in the annual giving campaign are utilized.

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

834. I understand the need for and uses of endowment funding.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

835. I am likely to contribute to CCP through my will (planning giving).

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

CCP's fundraising efforts should be placed on:

-----

836. CCP's fundraising efforts should be placed on: Annual giving campaign to support  
general operations of the school

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

837. Athletics

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

838. Building expansion or capital campaigns

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

839. Educational Field Trips

(1) Strongly agree

- (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

840. Endowments

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

841. Fine Arts

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

843. Tuition Assistance

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

851. The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to Catholic Christian schools

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

---

852. The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to non-denominational Christian schools

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

853. The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to private non-Christian schools

- (1) Strongly agree
  - (2) Agree
  - (3) Somewhat agree
  - (4) Neither agree nor disagree
  - (5) Somewhat disagree
  - (6) Disagree
  - (7) Strongly disagree
- 

854. The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to public schools

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----

The following questions are for classification purposes only:

-----

873. Your gender:

(1) Male

(2) Female

-----

874. Your marital status:

(1) Married

(2) Single

(3) Widowed

(4) Divorced

-----

875. Your ethnic or national background:

(1) Caucasian

(2) African American

(3) Asian American

(4) Hispanic or Latino

(5) Native American

(6) Multi-Racial

(7) Some other nationality=

-----

876. Your annual household income:

(1) Under \$25,000

(2) \$25,000-\$49,999

(3) \$50,000-\$74,999

(4) \$75,000-\$99,999

(5) \$100,000-\$149,999

(6) \$150,000-\$199,999

(7) \$200,000 or Higher

-----

The final questions:

-----

877. I feel that I can strongly recommend CCP to my friends and family.

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Somewhat agree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat disagree

(6) Disagree

(7) Strongly disagree

-----



878. If my family had to make the school choice decision all over again, we would choose CCP.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

-----

879. Overall, my family is very satisfied with our experiences at CCP.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Somewhat agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Somewhat disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX C: VARIABLES AND INDIVIDUAL ITEMS COMPRISING FACTORS IN CHAPTER FOUR ANALYSIS

Variables and Individual Items Comprising Factors in Chapter Four Analysis are listed in the chart below. All items were taken from the CCP Constituents' Survey and used a seven-point Likert scale: (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Somewhat agree, (4) Neither agree nor disagree, (5) Somewhat disagree, (6) Disagree, and (7) Strongly disagree.

Factor/ Variable	Item
---------------------	------

<b>Academic Factors</b>	
Rigor and Excellence	Academic excellence- meaning as an academy of learning it is our primary but not exclusive goal to prepare students academically for college and beyond.
	The emphasis on academics is appropriate.
	The quality of academics is high.
	Faculty use a variety of instructional strategies appropriate to their content area/grade level.
	Students are challenged academically.
	Student is continuously growing academically.
	Student academic achievement is effectively recognized.

Biblical Integration	CCP has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and Computer Sciences
	CCP has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and Fine Arts
	CCP has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and Foreign Language
	CCP has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and Language Arts/English
	CCP has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and Math
	CCP has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and Sciences (Biology, Chemistry,)
	CCP has helped my student see the connection between Biblical truth and Social Sciences (History, Geography,)

Factor/ Variable	Item
---------------------	------

<b>Spiritual Factors</b>	
Christ-Centeredness	Christ-Centeredness - meaning following how Christ himself led, served, taught, loved, and lived; we strive to base all we do on His word.
	Every school employee that my student meets appears to have an obvious personal, active relationship with Jesus Christ.
	CHCA has allocated sufficient financial and staffing resources toward the mission of being Christ-centered.
	CHCA delivers an education based on a Christian worldview.
	Administration demonstrates godly behavior based on Biblical principals in interaction with students and each other.
	Parents demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principles in interaction with students and each other.
	Faculty demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principles in interaction with students and each other.
	Staff demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principles in interaction with students and each other.
Spiritual Growth	The Chapel programs engage my student in ways that encourage a relationship with and growth in Christ.
	CCP provides spiritual growth and spiritual leadership opportunities for my student.
	CCP helps students grow spiritually.
	Students are growing spiritually at CCP.
	CHCA's parents are growing spiritually through their connections to CCP.
	Chapel Program has a positive impact on spiritual life.
Service and Outreach	Servant Leadership - Believing in the power of servanthood, servant leadership will be taught, modeled and encouraged to all students, staff and parents so that all are equipped for the situations in life that God calls them to lead.
	Outreach/Service - modeling Christ in all we do, we will provide opportunity daily and through special events for students, staff, and parents to share Christ's love through service and witness to others.
	Service Program has a positive impact on spiritual life.

<b>Factor/ Variable</b>	<b>Item</b>
-----------------------------	-------------

Christian Studies	The Christian Studies program helps my student develop appropriate value for Scripture.
	CCP helps students see the connection between Biblical truth and Christian Studies.
	Christian Studies have a positive impact on spiritual life.

<b>Financial Factors</b>	
Tuition	CCP provides high value for the cost of tuition.
Relative Value to Other School Types	The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to Catholic Christian schools.
	The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to non-denominational Christian schools.
	The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to private non-Christian schools.
	The educational experience at CCP compares well in value to public schools.
Fiscal Stewardship	Stewardship- Acknowledging we are blessed in many ways, we as a school will model strong fiscal stewardship and will encourage, train and expect students, staff and parents to be wise and generous stewards over their time, talents, and money.
	I understand how the funds that are contributed in the annual giving campaign are utilized.
	I understand the need for and uses of endowment funding.

<b>School Culture</b>	
Discipline/ Safety	Students place a high priority on obeying the rules.
	Classrooms are well managed.
	Discipline is fairly administered.
	CCP facilities are safe.
Diverse Community	It is important that CCP's community of students, faculty, and staff be diverse in ethnic and racial background.
	It is important that CCP's community of students, faculty, and staff be diverse in: Socio-economic status
	It is important that CCP's community of students, faculty, and staff be diverse in: Religious denominations

Factor/ Variable	Item
---------------------	------

	CCP has an appropriate gender balance among students.
	CCP has an appropriate level of ethnic and racial diversity among students.
	CCP has an appropriate gender balance among its faculty.
	CCP has an appropriate level of ethnic and racial diversity among its faculty.
	Academic programs provide opportunities to learn about diverse cultures.
Physical Climate/ Facilities	CCP's landscaping and grounds are appropriately maintained.
	CCP facilities are kept appropriately clean during school hours.
	CCP facilities are kept appropriately clean outside of school hours.
	CCP facilities are properly maintained.
Communication	Faculty are approachable, available and easy to relate to.
	Faculty are responsive.
	The principal is approachable, available and easy to relate to.
	The principal is responsive.
	Parents receive timely, accurate, and adequate information for their families to be prepared for the start of the school year.
	I know whom to contact at CCP if I have a question.
Sense of Community	A Vibrant Sense of Community- acting intentionally, we will foster a vibrant, connected culture of caring, fellowship and respect among students, staff and parents.
	A Joyful Spirit- having an attitude of gratitude for God's blessings that are lived out in every day smiles, laughter, and by celebrating demonstrated character and unique achievements. This results in a contagious joy that connects at the heart level.
	CCP is a friendly place for students and it is easy for them to make friends here.
	CCP has appropriate school spirit and pride.
	Students demonstrate respect for fellow students.
	Students demonstrate respect for faculty.
	Students demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to the school.
	CCP's parents demonstrate involvement in the school.

Factor/ Variable	Item
---------------------	------

	CCP's parents show respect for faculty and administrators.
	CCP's parents demonstrate support for the school.
	CCP's parents have ample opportunity to volunteer at the school.
Mission	CCP achieves its mission statement at my student's/my building.
	I understand how the school carries out the overall mission of CCP.

Extra/Co-Curricular Factors	
General Opportunities	Students have many opportunities to be highly involved.
	Students have satisfactory learning opportunities outside the classroom.
Athletics	CCP has helps students see the connection between Biblical truth and athletics.
	Athletics have a positive impact on spiritual life.
	Coaches and Athletic Staff demonstrate godly behavior based on Biblical principles in interaction with students and each other.
Fine Arts	Fine Arts have a positive impact on spiritual life.

Personnel	
Principal	The principal is respectful.
	The principal is involved in the lives of students.
	The principal serves as a strong spiritual role model.
Teachers	Faculty are respectful.
	Faculty are involved in the lives of students.
	Faculty serve as strong spiritual role models.
	Faculty CHCA recruits quality staff.
	CHCA retains quality staff.
	Faculty are professional.

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### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

August, 1995	State of Ohio Clinical Counseling Certification Wright State University Graduate School of Counseling Dayton, Ohio
June, 1992	M.Ed., Agency and Community Counseling Xavier University Graduate School of Education Cincinnati, Ohio
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### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

7/99 – Present	<b>Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy Middle School</b> Cincinnati, Ohio
7/04 – Present	<i>Middle School Principal</i>
7/99 – 6/04	<i>Director of Student Development</i>
10/02 – Present	<b>The Focused Life</b> Loveland, Ohio <i>President</i>
5/97 – 6/99	<b>Concern Plus Employee Assistance Program</b> Cincinnati, Ohio Clinical Treatment Coordinator
5/95 – 5/97	<b>Butler County Catholic Social Services</b> Hamilton, Ohio Clinical Counselor
9/92 – 5/95	<b>LifeWay Christian Counseling Services</b> Sharonville, Ohio Intake Coordinator/Counselor
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### **EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS**

*Developing Specialized and Constantly Adapting Workers for a Flat World: Common Unit Based Assessment and Overt Teaching of Academic Skills to Improve Student Achievement (2006)*

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### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

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